Walking In Step with the Holy Spirit

Passage: Galatians 5:16-26 | Speaker: Steve Grothoff | Date: 261101

SUMMARY

Galatians 5:16-26 sets two ways of living side by side: the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. Steve walks through the works of the flesh, from sexual immorality and idolatry to anger, division, and drunkenness, and points to Jesus' warning to stay awake and sober, with strength to escape coming from the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is one fruit with many parts, all flowing out of love, and self-control is where it culminates. Living by the Spirit means crucifying the flesh in an ongoing battle, and keeping in step with him by abiding in Christ, in the Word, and in prayer.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The works of the flesh are plain, and those who practice them will not inherit the kingdom of God. Anger is not itself sin, but what we do with it can be.
- Fruit of the Spirit is singular: when we receive the Spirit we receive all of it, and every part flows out of love.
- Our walk should be countercultural and unnatural to unbelievers, because it follows the Spirit and not our own desires.
- Crucifying the flesh is an ongoing battle for life. Even Paul still struggled, so no one has arrived.
- Keeping in step with the Spirit means following closely behind Christ: abide in him, spend intentional time in the Word and prayer, and ask whether you are being led by the Spirit or by your own desires.

Scripture Reading: Galatians 5:16-26

So, alright, we are in Galatians, we are in chapter 5, verses 16-26, and it says, But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh. But these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident. Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissension, divisions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is this, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Opening Prayer

Father, as we go through your word this morning, Father, we just thank you for the Holy Spirit. Thank you for the guidance that it gives us, because without it, we would be lost. We would still be wandering. Father, we thank you that you have called us, that you have equipped us, and Father, that you have indwelt us with your own Spirit to guide us, to teach us, and to show us what we should and should not do. So, Father, we love you. We love you. We thank you for your word. Father, we thank you for your Son. And we ask all these things in your name. Amen.

All right.

Where We Left Off

Last week, we talked about freedom in the Spirit. We talked about how we are free from sin, not free to sin.

So, how do we do, how do we know what is and isn't sinful? Things like that. Paul is going through Galatians, and he's covering a lot of the things, these things that have pervaded the believers, and things like legalism, following the law to be saved, following all these rules, because you have to do this if you want to be saved. And then we got into, a couple weeks ago, into works-based salvation, talking about, well, you have to do this because you're saved. If you say you're saved, this is what you

have to do now. And that you're not a good enough Christian because you haven't done these things. They were basing their spiritual maturity on what they did and not on how they were growing in the Spirit. So, this week, we're going to talk about what it means to walk in the Spirit. We talked about what it was to be free in the Spirit. Now, how do we walk in the Spirit? How do we follow what the Spirit wants us to do? Because we still do have a basic ground rules that we are and aren't supposed to do. And he gives us a list there of things that are not okay. Things that we shouldn't do. And so, we talk about this in here. And he talks about this in Romans. I'm going to flip a little bit back and forth. I don't expect you guys to because I'm trying to speed run this a little bit because we had a lot of music this morning, which is great. I love it.

So, Romans, he tells them because he's talking about the difference between slaves of righteousness and slaves to sin. And he says, What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? And by no means do you know, do you not know that if you were present, if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness.

He tells them, guys, you're going to be, you're going to follow one thing or the other. You're going to do one or the other.

The Works of the Flesh

And he goes through this list of things. And like I said, we're going to kind of go through these kind of quick. But he talks about the works of the flesh. And he says, Sexual immorality, impurity, and sensuality. Now, these things include, as they cover in other places in the Bible, things that include fornication, adultery, homosexuality, lustful thoughts, pornography, and anything else outside of the bounds of what God intended the purpose of sex to be. The Greek word used for sexual immorality is pornea. We use that word for pornography. This is sexual immorality, and it covers a whole lot of different things when he covers this. And when Paul writes to the Corinthians, he says, You were bought with a price, so glorify God with your body.

Sexual Immorality and Idolatry

Your body is not yours. Your body, he talks about in Romans that sexual sin, that it's us. We are doing not only harm to others, but we are intentionally doing harms to ourselves as well. And then he talks about idolatry and sorcery. We've spoken at length about idolatry in the past, that anything that you prioritize over God can be considered an idol. It is an idol.

Sorcery

Sorcery. The word here used for sorcery is the Greek word pharmakeia, which is where we get our word pharmacy from. When he talks about sorcery, he's not talking about wizard hats and things like that. When he's talking about sorcery, he's talking about drugs, mind alteration, things like that. In those days, they had people that would sit and chant, and they would get themselves into a trance, and that was how they spoke to their gods. It's things like this, mind alteration. In our day, we have the same kind of problems. We have a lot of New Age things, a lot of New Age philosophies out there. They had to do this, do that, and this is how you talk to your inner spirit and things like that. There's just a slew of it out there. And Paul is saying, avoid these things, guys. These are not spirit. People claim they are spiritual things. They are not spirit-filled things. Ephesians 5.5, he says, For you may be sure of this, that everyone, everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, who is covetous, that is an idolater, has no inheritance of the kingdom of God. He tells us later on that if we do these things, we will not inherit the kingdom of God. Paul tells this often to the people he's writing to. Then we get into enmity, strife, jealousy, and fits of anger.

Anger

We read in Ephesians 4.26 that anger is not a sin. He says, be angry, but do not sin. Being angry is not a sin. What we do with our anger is what causes us to sin. Remaining angry, starting arguments, causing contention, holding grudges, being unforgiving. These are the kinds of things that he's talking about. It's okay to be angry, but let that anger drive you in a positive way. There's nothing wrong with a little bit of motivation. I mean, when you feel that fire, use that fire for the right things. That's what Paul is trying to get at here, and that's what he's trying to tell the Ephesians, too, is be angry, but don't sin. And he tells them, and don't go to sleep on your sin. Don't let the sun go down on your anger.

Don't hold on to it.

Rivalries, Dissension, and Divisions

Then he gets into rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy. The Bible warns us many, many places against divisive people and tells us to have nothing to do with them, tells us to avoid them. There are places such as Romans 16, 17, and 18, chapter 16, verses 17 and 18, Titus 3.10, Jude 17 through 19, 2 Timothy 3.5, 2 Thessalonians 3.14. If you guys want a list of those, I have them. And then we read in Proverbs 6, 16 through 19. He says there are six things that the Lord hates, that the Lord hates, seven

that are an abomination to him, haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans. There's one of them. Feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and one who sows discord among brothers.

It's not a loving thing. It's not the thing that we're supposed to do. We are not supposed to be divisive. We are not supposed to divide one another. We are not supposed to pit each other against one another. That is not okay. These are things that are works of the flesh, as Paul calls them here.

Drunkenness and Carousing

And the last two we see, we see drunkenness and carousing. He's talking about in this time, and we have it still today, the culture of endless partying and constantly hooking up and never seeing somebody again. And we have a world that is just absolutely overtaken with things like this.

Jesus warns us about this.

When he's talking to his disciples about the end times and about the last days, he says, But watch yourselves, lest your hearts be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness. Dissipation was like being hung over. Dissipation was speaking of the headache and laziness that comes from a night of drinking.

Do not be weighed down by these things in the cares of this life, for that day will come upon you suddenly like a trap. For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. But stay awake at all times. Be sober at all times, is what it says. Same wording. Praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place and to stand before the Son of Man.

Staying Awake in the Last Days

As we get into the last days, which I think we can all, if we've read our Bibles, can agree we are at, in some way, shape, or form, we are in the last days that are being spoken of. He's telling us here, Jesus says, These things are going to happen. He says, Pray. Be awake. Be sober-minded. Be ready at all times, because these things are going to be happening.

And you need to have the strength to escape them. Where do we get our strength that we escape them from? We get our strength from the Spirit. Revelation tells us that those that partake in these kinds of lifestyles will suffer eternal damnation.

They will not inherit the kingdom.

The Fruit of the Spirit

Then we get into the fruits of the Spirit. Again, like I said, we're going to go through this kind of quick. Notice it says, fruit of the Spirit. Not fruits of the Spirit. One. Singular. But it's a bunch of different things. You don't just get one or two of these. When you get the Spirit, you get every one of these. You get every one of them. So you can't say, well, God gave me love, but He didn't give me patience. Well, there's something to be said about that, because if you're loving, you're also patient. So, as we see in these, when we receive Christ, and then when we receive the Holy Spirit, these things will become attributes of our living. Each and every one of these will be an attribute of the way that we live. Our attitudes, behaviors, and mindsets change. The way that we are commanded to live comes down to one word, like we talked about last week in verse 14. Love. Love your neighbor.

Love and Joy

The rest of these are also an outflowing of love. He starts out there with love. Love God. Love your neighbor. Then He gets into joy. We should be glad to serve one another. We should have joy. We should be lovingly and gladly serving one another.

This is also obedience to Christ. This is living the way that Christ lived. He lived to serve others. We should be doing the same, and it brings us joy.

We just spoke about enmity, division.

Peace

The opposite of that is peace. Peace. Not fighting over differences. Being okay with things that maybe one person feels this way and another feels this way. Because if it's not a biblical concept, then we don't need to argue over it. The type of music that we listen to. As long as it's... I mean, I listen to probably some very... Some stuff that most of you guys wouldn't listen to, but I'll tell you right now, every bit of it is pretty God-glorifying. I make sure of that. But most people would listen to the music that I listen to and be like, I don't understand how you can listen to this or how you can think this is God-glorifying. But you listen to the lyrics and the things like that. We all have differences. We all have things that we like differently. We all have our own likes and dislikes and preferences. That's okay. What's not okay is arguing over them.

Patience

Patience. This is the next one. Long-suffering is another word for it. Bearing with one another, as we'll get into next week. Learning how to be patient with one another. I will tell you right now, patience. God gave me patience, and I'm so glad that I got a good dose of it when I got saved, because I was an angry person, and I got a lot of patience really quick. And it wasn't too hard fought, but I had a lot that still was. But patience is a gift from God. Patience is a fruit of the Spirit.

Kindness and Goodness

Kindness, goodness, faithfulness. Kindness. The root word of kindness means giving someone something that they are not owed. If you are kind, you give somebody something that they are undeserving of. Selflessness. That's what kindness is. Goodness. Useful, desirable, productive, beneficial. It's what to be good, to have something that is good, it is that. This word originally was used for God only. That was a word that when we said God is good, it wasn't like, how was your day at school? Good. Like, God was good. And we have watered that word down so much. When God created things, He said, these are good. He didn't say, these are okay. It wasn't what He was saying, like, well, these things are all right. He said, these things are good. These things are useful, desirable, beneficial to what we do as Christians.

Faithfulness and Gentleness

Faithfulness. Walking in accordance with God. We've talked about faithfulness often.

We're trusting God, not ourselves. That is what faithfulness calls us to do. Gentleness. In times of confrontation, this is when we have the best interest of everybody at heart, not just ourselves. Not us trying to get our point across and say, hey, this is what I want, and this is what you're going to believe, because this is what I want, and I don't care what you want. We see Paul struggling with being gentle at the beginning of chapter 3. He, did you owe foolish Galatians? Paul has a problem sometimes with being gentle, but there is a time and a place sometimes where to get people shook up, that's what Paul did. He does this often in quite a few of his letters. He's got some pretty brash words that he uses.

Self-Control

All of these then, if love is the beginning of these things, if all of these things are an outflowing of love, then a culmination of all of them is the last one there. Self-control.

Self-control is something that we, that's how we avoid sin. It's learning how to be controlled by the Spirit, not our own desires. Learning how to keep ourselves under control.

Proverbs 5, 22, 23 says, Self-control matters, guys. Being in control of yourself and your desires matters. So what does it mean then? What does it mean to live in the Spirit, live by the Spirit? What is that?

Living by the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is our source of power and guidance in our Christian lives. We are indwelt with the Holy Spirit when we become Christians. Our responsibility then as Christians is to glorify God and image Christ.

We, of our own natural powers, will not do that on our own. The gifts that we have, the things that we do, the joy that comes from us glorifying God and imaging Christ is a direct result of the Holy Spirit because as ourselves, we would not do it. So when we allow the Holy Spirit to lead and guide, we are then better able to avoid the temptations of sin, walking in the Spirit.

Countercultural and Unnatural

Our Christian walk should be both countercultural and unnatural to unbelievers. It should be countercultural. It should be against what the world wants, against what the world says that we should be doing. And it should be unnatural. It should be against what we ourselves want and what we ourselves think that we want.

Jesus was very countercultural. Jesus did things. Jesus took what they were teaching, what they thought good was. The whole Sermon on the Mount, the whole Sermon on the Mount is, you think this is what good looks like? This is what good looks like. You think murder is wrong? I tell you that if you hate your brother, even in your heart, you are murdering. Jesus says, you think this is bad? I'll show you what bad is. And he points everything, everything that he points to. He says, don't look at what the external is. Don't look at the product of what it is. Look at the behind what it is. Look at the heart of why you do something. You don't murder somebody because you like them. You murder somebody because you hate them. And when you hate someone, that's the beginning of that. And so he says, don't even let that get a foothold. That's where he's talking about. I tell you, you know, don't even look at somebody in a lusting manner. He says, don't even do that because the beginnings of that will tell you that it's not okay. And sin will prevail if you let it, if you just keep letting it into your life. 1 Peter 4.4, he says, they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery and they malign you. When you live in a way contrary to what the world thinks that you should be living,

people are going to have things to say about it. You're going to get persecuted for it. And I, I gave up trying to be cool a long time ago and I just, it, it doesn't matter what the world thinks is cool. What the world thinks is what we should be doing. It doesn't matter. Well, you should be doing this. Well, if that's what's going on with you, you should do this. Like, no, that's not what the Bible teaches me. The Bible teaches me I should do this. We should be, we should be turning to the Bible and turning to Jesus, turning to God through prayer and, and, and reading the scripture for our, the things for our guidance. That's where our guidance should come from.

Crucify the Flesh

So how do we do this? How do we, how do we live by the spirit? How do we walk, learn to walk in the spirit and follow his guidance? Or as he says there in verse 25, keeping in step with the spirit on verse 24, he tells us that, that we should be crucify the flesh, crucify the flesh. So what is, what does that mean? Paul describes this transition in a couple other different ways throughout his epistles. He includes things like put to death, the old man and live as the new one reborn in Christ. He says, shed or take off your old sinful life and put on the righteousness of Christ. There's a, a removal of what you were and a putting on of what you are now. There is not, it's not put this on over top of what you got. He doesn't say, keep your old shirt on and put a new jacket on over top of it. Cause guess what? You're still dirty underneath. You're still the same underneath. It's just an outside. That was the outside righteousness that we try to put on, but we still, we still got underneath. We've still got this sin that we like to hold on to. Well, this shirt's comfy, so I'm going to keep it on. No, it's a remote, complete removal and a complete transition into something different.

Paul tells us this. Paul tells us this is an ongoing battle that we will fight for the rest of our lives. This isn't a, it isn't a one and done like, oh, okay, well, I've done it. All right, I've succeeded. No, over time it'll get easier, but sometimes we all have lingering repetitive sins in our lives that are harder to destroy. Each and every one of us has something that was hard for us to let go of, or still is hard for us to let go of.

Paul speaks about this. Paul says, talks about doing the things that he hates and not doing the things that he knows that he should be doing. Paul didn't have it figured out either. Paul, Paul was, was working on this. Paul was one of the, the, the biggest evangelists in the early church. And even he didn't have it figured out. He's like, guys, I'm, I'm still struggling with this. It's not that you guys like that I've arrived and you guys haven't. He says, I still struggle with the same stuff. I tell you guys, I, I, I don't do what I should be doing and I do what I shouldn't be doing.

Keep in Step with the Spirit

And then keeping in step with the spirit. This is a different wording than he uses in verse 16. He says, walk in the spirit in verse 16. Then he says, keep in step with the spirit. This implies walking in line behind a leader. This implies following closely behind a commander in a military term.

Closely following the guidance of Christ's example through the power of the Holy Spirit. That is what this is leading to. Abide in Christ, as Jesus said. Abide in me and I will abide in you. Follow closely. Spend intentional time in the word. Spend intentional time in prayer. Praying through what your life looks like. These are the things. God, these are the things that I still struggle with. Help me fix these things. Want, have a desire to get closer to God. Have a desire to bring yourself closer to him and bring him closer to you. That is, that should be, that is what walking in step with the spirit looks like. If you're not walking in step with somebody when you're following behind them. Have you ever, you ever been walking behind somebody and stepped on their heel. Or had somebody walking behind you and step on their heel. Because you aren't following in step. When we were in the military, you learn how to walk in step. You learn how to, to walk close to one another. But you all step with the right foot. And then you all step with the left foot. It's, it's, it's, it's a, it's, you don't do it naturally. But then guess what? But after a while, you get out of basic training. You get in, you get into your regular job. And next thing you know, you can tell the guys that are pretty new out of basic. Because they're walking in step with one another. It just happens naturally. It's something that you realize out of the corner of your eye. And you just do.

And that's, that's, it's natural. That should be what, what this is. That's what he's saying. Keep in step with the spirit. We should be naturally following what the spirit tells us to do. And it should just come easy. So we talked about the works of the flesh, the things that we are supposed to take off, the things that we are supposed to dispose of, get rid of. And then we talked about the fruit of the spirit. We talked about these things that we put on, this part of our life that becomes better. The part of our life that, that God takes over and we let go. We submit. And then we learn to live by the spirit.

Examine Your Walk

So I would ask you guys, as you go through your week this week, think and, and kind of be praying about and look, assess your life and think, am I living by the spirit, am I living by the spirit, am I living in a way that, that I can, can clearly see that, that I am being led and guided by the Holy Spirit and not by my own desires. Following the desires, following the things that I should be following and not following the desires of my flesh.

So, please be considering that because I, I know we all have things in our lives that, that we could do better. We all have things in our lives that we could let go of a little bit more. And let's just put our faith where it belongs and put our trust and our guidance in the one that knows best for us.

Closing Prayer

Father, we, we thank you for your word.

Father, we thank you for the guidance that it brings us. And Father, we just, we love you. Father, we just, as we go through our week this week, Father, help us to just stay guided and directed by you. Help us to, to walk in step with you, walk close to you. As we talked about a month ago, help us to follow so close to you that we get covered in the dust of your sandals, that we get followed, follow you so close that we are, that we, it's hard to distinguish the difference between you and us. Father, just help us to be, help us to abide.

Father, we love you. Father, we thank you for your word. And Father, we thank you for the gift of your son. And we ask all these things in your name. Amen.

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