

## Galatians, Chapter Five, Lesson Three

WALKING BY THE SPIRIT Galatians 5:13-18

### STIMULATE

\*\* How effective were you this past week in "Strengthening the Brethren"? Did anyone have the opportunity to "warn, encourage or protect" a fellow Christian? Did you find yourself being strengthened by someone else in the faith?

We must remain alert to opportunities that the Lord places before us to minister to the needs of others around us. We should be prepared each day to warn, encourage and protect others with instruction from the word of God. cf. 1Peter 4:10

### MOTIVATE

\*\* For us to be effective as Christians in the role of strengthening those around us, we are going to have to take a closer look at who or what it is that controls our own life. Today Paul is going to teach us the one true path to spiritual victory! How can I live each day of my life to the glory of God and not be discouraged or disappointed by the negative influence of sin? Turn with me to Galatians 5:13-18 and let's learn the answer together.

Read Passage (V.13-15) (V.16-18)

Opening Prayer

### *Walking by the Spirit*

### INVESTIGATE

**V.13** \*\* After blasting the false teachers last week, of what does Paul now lovingly remind his readers?

"...you were called to freedom..." (cf. Galatians 5:1)

\*\* How do we know that Paul is reaffirming his love for the Galatians as he reminds them of their freedom?

Because once again he uses the loving term brethren [adelphos] to convey his tender care and concern for their souls. Paul will use this term nine times in this brief little epistle, just to make sure that the Galatians understand his corrective tones are part of his loving kindness toward them.

\*\* After reminding them of their freedom, what caution does he now offer to the beloved brethren?

"...do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh..."

\*\* What does that mean?

Knowing that Jesus Christ has made the payment for your sin and given you the free gifts of His righteousness and eternal life, don't take those gifts for granted by living a life that caters to every fleshly impulse. Let's look together at similar cautions from the word of God on this subject:

cf. 1Peter 2:16 - "...do not use your freedom as a covering for evil..."

1Peter 2:11 - "...fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul."

Rom. 13:13-14 - "...make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts."

Now back in Galatians 5:13...

\*\* Our flesh (or sinful desire) wants to master us, but we must be victorious over it! What alternative does Paul give to us in the place of feeding the flesh?

"...through love serve one another..." We can serve both the saved and the unsaved around us, instead of feeding our own sinful desires! cf. Ephesians 5:18 and 21 [w/Luke 6:11] (saved) and 1Corinthians 9:19 (unsaved).

**V.14** \*\* By now you might well expect the Judaizers to be saying, "With all of this freedom in Christ, there never was any use for the Law!" How does Paul address that argument?

Paul is not ignoring the Law, in fact he is desiring for the intent of the Law to be fulfilled.

"For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word..." That is important to Paul, he repeats it again in Galatians 6:2 and again to the Romans in 13:8 & 10.

Our Lord also addresses the importance of the Law in His Sermon on the Mount.  
cf. Matthew 5:17-18

\*\* Well then, if the Law is important, how is it fulfilled in our lives according to verse 14?

By loving your neighbor as yourself! With our preoccupation for the needs of others, our hearts are turned away from the desires of our own flesh while at the same time we are fulfilling the intent of the Law of God. cf. Philippians 2:3-4

**V.15** \*\* As you look at this next verse, do you think that Paul was aware of any conflicts in Galatia?

Yes! Because he warns them to not bite and devour [katesthio] one another. The word meant to swallow whole. Something had them so divided, that they wanted to destroy one another because of it!

\*\* What might be causing the division among the brethren in the region of Galatia?

- 1) Legalism vs. Freedom in Christ
- 2) Salvation by works vs. Salvation by grace

\*\* If they were to continue to fight among themselves, what would be the eventual outcome?

They would be consumed, or destroyed!

**V.16** \*\* What alternative does Paul offer to fighting?

"...walk by the Spirit..."

\*\* What is the immediate impact of doing that?

"you will not carry out the desire of the flesh" - This is talking about Holy Spirit control vs. flesh control, of our lives.

Join me in Romans 8:3-11 for Paul's exegesis of this phrase. What does it mean to be "Walking by the Spirit"?  
Read text, then cf. Galatians 5:24-25.

**V.17** \*\* That sounds like such an easy formula, according to Galatians 5:17 why is it still such a struggle?

"The flesh [and its desires] are set against the Spirit"

\*\* Is that all there is to the conflict?

No, the Spirit is also against the flesh!

\*\* How does Paul describe their mutual relationship?

They are in opposition to one another!

\*\* We have found the battle ground in which the Spirit of Christ and the sinful desires of the flesh do their battle. Unfortunately, it is in us! What would be the result if we lose that battle with our flesh?

We would "not do the things that [we] please". The apostle Paul was very familiar with this battle and fortunately for us, he was equally transparent in showing us the victory.

All see - Romans 7:14-8:1

**Romans 7:14** - Paul is saying that he is "of" flesh, but not "in" the flesh. He is walking in the Spirit, but is unfortunately born of the flesh. Further, because of the fall of man, he is literally "under sin" as an inheritance from his forefathers.

7:15 - Paul has a desire to obey and hates any form of disobedience in his life.

7:17 - Paul distinguishes between himself and the sin in his members.

7:21 - Paul explains the principle the evil [or sin] is present in us who desire to do good (obey the word of God).

7:24 - Paul sees his desperate condition.

7:25 - Paul sees his deliverer.

8:1 - Paul proclaims the victory!

Finally, back in Galatians 5:18...

**V.18** \*\* We have learned that the Law produces only death for us, because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and the wages of sin is death. (cf. Romans 3:23 and 6:23) What wonderful news does Paul now give us regarding those who are being controlled by the Holy Spirit?

"...if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law."

\*\* Why is that true?

Being "led by the Spirit" demands that you are born of the Spirit!

If we are born of the Spirit of Christ, we have been saved by grace through faith and are no longer under the penalty of the Law, because Jesus Christ has paid that penalty for us!

Jesus made this point clear to a Jewish teacher named Nicodemus.  
Look at it with me in **John 3:1-8**.

Jesus said that we must be born again or we cannot see the kingdom of God. He went on to say that we must be "born of water and the Spirit". When we see the Lord refer to water, we must understand that He is referring to the word of God.

cf. Ezekiel 36:25-27, Ephesians 5:25-26

That is why the apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ"(Romans 10:17) When we hear God's word about our sinful condition and the atonement made by Jesus Christ on our behalf, the Holy Spirit then causes us to be born again, to walk in newness of life by obeying His word.

\*\* A Christian, by definition, is someone who is always being led by the Spirit of Christ. Though we fail, it is the burning preoccupation of our heart to obey His word out of a lovingly devotion for all that He has done for us! The question becomes: are you led by the Spirit?

### **EXTRICATE**

\*\* As you look back over our passage for today, what are some reasons that we would want to be controlled by the Holy Spirit?

- 1) We have been set free from the Law in Christ.
- 2) We can serve one another through love.
- 3) We won't fight among ourselves.
- 4) We won't carry out the desires of the flesh.
- 5) We will be able to do the things we please! (Which by definition is, obeying the word of God)

### **DELINEATE**

\*\* While under the control of the Holy Spirit, what are some of the sinful patterns that we need to avoid?

- 1) Giving the flesh opportunity
- 2) Failing to love the brethren
- 3) Fighting and quarreling
- 4) Performing fleshly desires

### **EVALUATE**

\*\* How much of my life each day is truly being led by the Holy Spirit? How can I be more successful in my desire for the Spirit of Christ to control my life?

To answer that question we are going to look at one final verse together.

Please join me in 2Corinthians 10:5, let's learn together the secret of "Walking by the Spirit". Whether it is the thoughts of others who would be "raised up against the knowledge of God", or even our own fleshly thoughts, our victory comes each day as we take them "captive to the obedience of Christ".

## **ACTIVATE**

\*\* We study God's word together for His glory sake. Our lives must change from the former manner of life that we walked in when we were yet unsaved. Are you willing to let Him examine your heart today? Are you willing to ask Him to be in control of your life through the prompting of His spirit and the knowledge of His word?

Would each of you now, in a moment of silence, go before the Lord and ask Him to help you to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ? May we be a people who truly glorify God because each day we are "Walking by the Spirit"!

Closing Prayer