

GALATIANS 5

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Galatians chapter 5 as we continue our study through the Word of God and specifically here, the book of Galatians.

As we have seen in our study of this letter to the churches in Galatia, it is a hard-hitting letter that is trying to stop the spread of legalism in the church.

The Judaizes were coming in and saying that yes, you need Jesus to be saved but you also must be circumcised, you must keep the Law of Moses to be saved as well.

They were mixing Law and Grace together and those two don't mix, not even a little.

Think about it for a minute. You have pure water and you mix in that water just a few drops of poison.

Is that water still pure?

Absolutely not! You see, by adding poison to the water, you have not made the water more pure, but you have made it impure, deadly, it will kill you, even just a little.

And that is Paul's point in this letter.

If you remember from our last study back in Galatians chapter 4, we saw Paul speak of two covenants: Hagar the bondwoman represented the Law, and Sarah the freewoman represented Grace.

The Law keeps you in bondage and you can go down that path if you want, or you can receive the gift of Grace in Christ that will set you free.

Obviously, life in Christ is far better than the bondage of the Law, which can't save but it can only condemn us.

Why would you want to go back to the bondage of the Law instead of walking in the freedom that we have in Christ, being led by the Holy Spirit? We will see that tonight, standing fast in the liberty we have in Christ.

And we saw Paul conclude last time in Galatians chapter 4 by saying, **“So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.”** Galatians 4:31.

With that as our introduction, let’s begin reading in Galatians chapter 5, beginning in verse 1 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

GALATIANS 5

VERSE 1

Please understand what Paul is saying here. He is telling the Galatians that they need to stand constantly against legalism because it is so easy for legalism to creep back into our lives!

Grace has set us free but how often we fall prey to the idea that we have done this, and we have done that, and it ends up driving us back to legalism. I have done this, and God owes me that! Not at all!

It takes constant vigilance to guard against sliding back into the bondage of legalism once grace has set you free.

So we see here that Paul is admonishing the Galatians to walk in the truth he has presented, the freedom we have in Christ.

Now don’t think the liberty that Paul is speaking of is a liberty to do anything you desire, never denying any impulsive desire you may have.

No, Paul is speaking of our freedom, our liberty from earning our way into heaven by good works, the keeping of the Law.

The liberty we have from the guilt of sin, the power of sin upon our lives. We can walk in this liberty we have in Christ or be in bondage to the Law, which is like a yoke upon our lives that doesn't fit.

Luther sums it up like this, "Like oxen that toil in the yoke all day, and in the evening are turned out to graze along the dusty road, and at last are marked for slaughter when they can no longer draw the burden, so those who seek to be justified by the Law are 'entangled with the yoke of bondage,' and when they have grown old and broken-down in the service of the Law they have earned for their perpetual reward God's wrath and everlasting torment."

Make no mistake about it, Luther's picture is not pretty but that is the reality and that is what Paul is telling us, freedom in Christ or bondage to the Law!

VERSES 2-4

I am not sure that many of us think of it like this, but this is exactly what Paul is saying. When we embrace the Law as our rule of walking with God, we must let go of Jesus. He is no longer our righteousness; we attempt to earn it ourselves. I hope that makes sense, because that has been the point over and over again in Galatians.

You can accept it or reject it, but you can't say that Paul didn't speak against legalism or adding the Law to grace and how dangerous it will be to your life.

You see, as I have said, the Judaizers were telling the Galatians that you can have Jesus and a Law-relationship with God and Paul is telling them that this is not an option because the two don't mix.

Again, let's think about this, because God wants us to think about these things. If our righteousness is like filthy rags, according to Isaiah 64:6, why do we think we can enter into the presence of God by our good works, by our own righteousness?

Paul makes it clear in what Jesus has done for us in II Corinthians 5:21, "**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**"

The righteousness of Christ imputed into our lives by faith, He is our righteousness and if He is not, all that you do will profit you absolutely nothing in regard to your relationship with God!

Think about this. Paul said if you are circumcised for your salvation, then you must keep the whole Law because this was a sign of this Old Covenant. You see, if you put your faith in a ritual to make you righteous, then what Jesus did for you won't be of any benefit to you.

Remember that the Jewish teachers counted up 613 commandments in the Law of Moses!

Now you could try to keep them, but it would be difficult to remember everyone let alone keep them!

But if you do try to keep them for your salvation then Paul tells us, as well as James, that you must keep them all, perfectly, everyone!

In James 2:10 we see the impossibility of keeping the whole Law and what happens when we don't! He wrote, "**For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.**"

And you need to understand that you can't pick and choose which ones you like and don't like. You must keep the whole Law all the time!

That is Impossible to do?

That is exactly the point and thus, the Law brings us to our Savior, it brings us to Jesus! It doesn't save us; it doesn't have the power to do that!

Think of it like this. You are driving and the police pull you over for speeding, you broke the law.

As he starts to write out your ticket you tell him, "But officer, I haven't robbed a bank, shot anyone, doesn't that count?"

He would reply, "You don't get credit for keeping the law, only a penalty for breaking it and it doesn't matter how good you are, if you break the law you get a ticket, that is the consequence."

In God's economy, if you break one of His commandments, you are guilty of them all, all 613!

It is impossible to do and that is the point, we are saved by Grace through faith and not by the Law through works!

Now, here in Galatians 5:4 Paul says that they have "**fallen from grace.**"

Now there has been a lot of confusion regarding what Paul has said here. William MacDonald gives us some insight into the views of what is meant here and what it really means.

He wrote,

This verse has led to its share of controversy and has given rise to three main interpretations:

1. Many hold that Paul here teaches that it is possible for a person to be truly saved, then to fall into sin, and therefore to fall from grace and be forever lost. We believe such an interpretation to be unsound for two compelling reasons:

First, the verse does not describe saved persons who fall into sin. In fact, there is no mention of falling into sin. Rather, the verse is speaking of those who are living moral, respectable, upright lives and hope to be saved thereby. Thus the passage acts as a boomerang on those who use it to support the falling away doctrine. They teach that a Christian must keep the law, live a perfect life and otherwise refrain from sinning in order to remain saved. However, this Scripture insists that all who seek to be justified by works of law or self-effort **have fallen from grace.**

Secondly, this interpretation contradicts the over-all, consistent testimony of the NT to the effect that every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is eternally saved, that no sheep of Christ will ever perish, and that salvation depends entirely on the finished work of the Savior, and not on man's feeble efforts (John 3:16, 36; 5:24; 6:47; 10:28).

2. A second interpretation of the verse is that it refers to those who were originally saved by faith in the Lord Jesus, but who subsequently put themselves under the law to retain their salvation or to achieve holiness. In other words, they were saved by grace, but now seek to be kept by law. In this case, to fall from grace is, *“to turn from God's way of perfecting His saints by the work of the Spirit in them, and to seek that end through the observance of external rites and ceremonies, which men of the flesh can observe as well as saints of God.”*

This view is unscriptural, first because the verse does not describe Christians who seek holiness or sanctification, but rather unsaved persons who seek *justification* by law-keeping. Note the wording - **you who attempt to be justified by law**. And second, this explanation of the verse implies the possibility of saved people being subsequently severed from Christ, and this is inconsistent with right views of the grace of God.

3. The third interpretation is that Paul is speaking of people who might profess to be Christians but who are not truly saved. They are seeking to be justified by keeping the law. The apostle is telling them that they cannot have two saviors; they must choose either Christ or the law. If they choose the law, then they are severed from Christ as their only possible hope of righteousness; they **have fallen from grace**.

- William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary* p. 1891

You see, for the unbeliever, he may have heard of the Gospel of Grace that is found in Jesus Christ but rejected it for a works relationship with God, which is empty.

For the so-called believer, if he says that He has received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and then has moved into a works relationship with God, then he was never really saved.

They heard the truth, they said they received the truth, but the truth had no effect upon their lives!

Paul makes that clear in Romans 3:20, where he tells us, “**Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.**” You see, it is not what we can do but what He has done in our lives and is doing in our lives!

In Romans 6:23 Paul tells us, “**For the wages of sin is death, but the [free] gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**”

If you want to get payment for all that you have done apart from Christ, those good works that saved you, you will get death!

But, the free gift of God is eternal life and that is found in the finished work of Christ on the cross of Calvary!

I can't work my way into heaven because the work has been finished by Jesus and thus, if I add anything to His finished work, I am not making it better, but I am cheapening it and making His work no effect in my life!

Again, this is so important for us to understand and I think that is why Paul has spent so much time on this issue of Law and Grace because it has eternal consequences attached to what we believe!

Boice puts it this way in regard to that phrase, "**you have fallen from grace.**" He tells us, "The phrase does not mean that if a Christian sins, he falls from grace and thereby loses his salvation. There is a sense in which to sin is to fall into grace, if one is repentant. But to fall from grace, as seen by this context, is to fall into legalism . . . Or to put it another way, to choose legalism is to relinquish grace as the principle by which one desires to be related to God."

VERSES 5-6

Notice how Paul sums this up for us. As we walk in the Spirit we wait with anticipation at what God, by His Spirit, is going to do in our lives as He molds and shapes us into the men and women of God that He wants us to be.

But, in a legalistic relationship they are doing the work, they are trying to enter in by good works. Interestingly enough, the legalist does not have faith working through love but works working through toil and labor. And it is a vain hope, because righteousness cannot be achieved in this way.

But for those that are in Christ, as The Amplified Bible puts this verse, "**For [if we are] in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith activated and energized and expressed and working through love.**" Galatians 5:6.

VERSES 7-8

This had to hurt! Paul is telling them that this belief that circumcision and law-keeping should be added to faith in Christ does not come from God but from the devil!

You see, the Galatians started out well on this road with God but then the Judaizers came in and “**hindered**” them or broke up the road they were traveling on so they could not continue on.

And again, don’t miss this point because Paul hits them hard by telling them this thought of a legalistic relationship with God did not come from God, which means it is a doctrine of demons spread through man! False teachers with their false doctrine they were listening to instead of God!

VERSE 9

Keep in mind that leaven in the Scriptures represents evil, sin. In fact, in the Jewish way of thinking, leaven almost always stood for evil influence.

In knowing that, we see that Paul is saying that the legalistic commitment they have right now may be small, but it is so dangerous that it can corrupt everything.

A vivid illustration of this happened back on January 19, 2004. My dad died from cancer.

Back in April of 2003 he was diagnosed with colon cancer and had part of his colon removed.

Now here is the thing, one little stray cancer cell can metastasize and travel throughout the body as happened with my dad.

Within less than one year the cancer spread to his brain, his lungs, his liver and he died.

Paul's point is this. A single false doctrine can spread, it can multiply throughout a multitude of believers and cause great destruction in their spiritual lives. These cancers must be excised completely or look out; it will be like a spark in a dry forest and devour many lives! Don't be misled!

Let me share this with you and again, you will see what I mean about how destructive these things can be. We are told,

At the 1938 NCAA Championships in Minneapolis, Louie Zamperini was the man to beat. Coaches from rival schools had even ordered their runners to sharpen the spikes on their shoes and to slash Louie.

“Halfway through the race, just as Louie was about to move ahead for the lead, several runners shouldered around him, boxing him in. Louie tried repeatedly to break loose, but he couldn't get around the other men. Suddenly, the man beside him swerved in and stomped on his foot, impaling Louie's toe with his spike. A moment later, the man ahead began kicking backward, cutting both of Louie's shins. A third man elbowed Louie's chest so hard that he cracked Louie's rib.”

This is what the Judaizers, the agitators, were doing to the Galatians. They had come onto the track and surrounded the Galatians; they had boxed them in. They were stomping on their feet, slashing at their shins, even elbowing them in the chest, perhaps breaking a few ribs. And Paul recognizes that there's no way the Galatians will finish the race set before them if they don't break free of the agitators' influence. But the only way they're going to break free is by removing this hindrance from their midst.

- R. Kent Hughes, Galatians, Gospel-Rooted Living, p. 181

Absolutely, and that is why we don't see Paul pull any punches here. He hits them hard and heavy so that they would see Law and Grace don't mix, they can't mix, they never mix!

Remember what John said in John 1:17, "**For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**" Never forget that!

And Paul made this powerful point back in Galatians 2:21, where he said, "**I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.**"

If I can get into heaven, if I can add to my salvation good works, then Jesus died in vain. There would be no reason for Him to die for my sins if my good works can get me in. But they can't and that is why God became flesh, dwelt among us, and went to the cross of Calvary to pay for all my sins, all your sins and He rose from the grave on the third day!

VERSES 10-12

We see here that Paul's confidence in the Galatian believes is that God will open their eyes to this error they were receiving, the Lord who brought life into them will sustain them.

The thing is, we must be careful not to open a door to these false teachers and their false doctrines that are dangerous to our spiritual lives but hold fast to God's Word!

And don't think that these false teachers are getting away with anything. They are not! You see, for those who are teaching these false doctrines, Paul says that God will judge them for these things.

Remember what we are told back in Matthew 18:6-7, Jesus said, **“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!”**

When Jesus says, **“Woe”** to someone, a word that speaks of cursing and condemnation, it is bad, and the person needs to pay attention!

Make no mistake about it, if you are leading God’s children astray, it is so bad that Jesus says it would be better to cast a 100-pound millstone around your neck and jump into the sea than face His judgment!

William Barclay tells the story of an old man who was terribly distraught. When asked what was bothering him, he replied, “When we were boys at play, one day at a crossroads we reversed a signpost, and I’ve never ceased to wonder how many people were sent in the wrong direction by what we did.”

Tragically, this goes on all the time as church leaders, people spread false doctrines like it was candy when in reality, it may be sugar coated but inside it is deadly poison!

This is very serious, and we need to be aware and pay attention!

Look at Galatians 5:11 once again. Paul said, **“And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then the offense of the cross has ceased.”**

In other words, Paul is saying that if he still preached the necessity of circumcision for salvation, as some were claiming, then why was he still being persecuted by those who are legalists?

You see, Paul was no longer under the bondage of the Law, but under the liberty that is found in Christ through faith in love.

To the Jews and legalists who tried to mix Law and Grace, the cross was an offense to them because it was saying that not only was the Mosaic Law nullified but so too was their rabbinical traditions!

But the cross is not done away, for without it we are still lost in our sins, slaves to the Law with no way out!

And I guess I do have to expound on what Paul said here in Galatians 5:12. I think as we read this in our English Bibles, we lose the thrust of what Paul is saying here.

That phrase, “**they were cut off**” is from the Greek word APOKOPTO, (ap-ok-op'-to) and it literally means to “*cut off*” like mutilate!

Paul was so passionately opposed to what these Judaizers were teaching that he wished they would mutilate themselves by castration!

“Paul, that is not how you win friends and influence people!”

No, it is not, but it did need to be said. We are so afraid that we are going to offend people that we don't stand up for the truths of God found in the Word of God! That should not be, it should not happen.

We need to earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us and, over the years, I have offended people who were holding onto false teaching and false teachers. That is exactly what I am to do, expose the error, praying that they would see the truth and turn back to Christ, but not ignore their false teaching and the false teachers that they want to bring in!

One writer put it like this. He wrote, “This word was habitually used to describe the practice of mutilation which was so prevalent in the Phrygian worship of Cybele. The Galatians were necessarily familiar with it, and it can hardly bear any other sense.” (Rendall)

You see, Paul was probably referring to the cult of Cybele, like we just read, and this cult was a popular nature goddess in Asia Minor during Paul’s day and many of the male worshipers, to show their devotion, would castrate themselves, including all their priests who were self-made eunuchs.

Listen to how one writer puts this verse. He tells us, “If the Judaizers are so insistent on circumcision as a means of pleasing God, why don’t they go all the way and castrate themselves as the supreme act of religious devotion? If, like the pagans, they believe human achievement can earn divine favor, why don’t they go to the pagan extremes of self-mutilation, like the Cybelene priests?” (John MacArthur)

You see folks, when you start adding any human works, human effort to God’s Grace you are exchanging the saving work of Christ on the cross of Calvary, that free gift of life that is only found in Him and receiving a pagan gospel that has no life, it can’t save!

VERSES 13-15

Now when you talk about our Christian liberty people get nervous. They think that we are giving people the freedom to do whatever they want. It will be a mess if we don’t set up boundaries, laws for them to follow.

Paul is addressing that question here and he shows us how our Christian liberty is to be used. And it should just make sense.

You see, our liberty in Christ is to be used in love, the practical application.

Paul's point is this. For those legalists who were concerned about Christian liberty being used to justify sin, letting the flesh nature rise up, that we are not to use the liberty we have in Christ as a base of operations to sin.

That old life, that flesh nature was crucified and yet it does try to resurrect itself in our lives.

Folks, we are in Christ and that means the mind of Christ flows in us and is reflected in our actions, at least it should be. It does not mean we are perfect, but also don't use that as an excuse for your behavior!

What can happen amongst Christians is they can allow the flesh to rise up and before you know it Christians are devouring each other, taking sides, divisions arise all because they love themselves more than they love others. That is what Paul is saying here, **“But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!”** Galatians 5:15.

What is the reason for that kind of behavior? It is simple. It is because self is being manifested instead of the Lord! And in the end, they consume each other – and in the body of Christ, sadly to say, we can call that cannibalism!

Morris put it like this, “The loveless life is a life lived on the level of animals, with a concern only for oneself, no matter what the cost to other people.”

How true that is. That is not the Spirit of God being manifested in our life, that is the flesh and that should not be, as Paul said in Philippians 2:1-5, **“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”**

In other words, let the liberty we have in Christ be guided by God’s love and this selfish, prideful, destructive attitude will not be seen in our lives and if it is there, it will melt away!

Warren Wiersbe sums this up for us as he wrote, “The picture here is of wild animals attacking each other. This in itself is proof that law cannot force people to get along with each other. No matter how many rules or standards a church may adopt, they are no guarantee of spirituality. Unless the Holy Spirit of God is permitted to fill hearts with His love, selfishness and competition will reign. Both extremes in the Galatian churches - the legalists and the libertines - were actually destroying the fellowship.”

May we be sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s guiding in our lives, because, believe it or not, there is a war going on and Paul is going to deal with that next!

VERSES 16-18

Here’s the thing. A “Life by the Spirit is neither legalism nor license – nor a middle way between them. It is a life of faith and love that is above all of these false ways.” (Boice)

We do need to understand that.

And we see here that Paul is commanding believer's to continually walk in the Spirit, not just when you feel like it!

He uses the Greek word PERIPATEO, (per-ee-pat-eh'-o) for "walk" and it is in the present tense, which speaks of a continuous action, a habitual way of life!

How does the Holy Spirit influence our lives?

First of all, the Holy Spirit influences our lives by the Word of God, the Bible.

Also, He uses others to minister to us.

And he also speaks to our hearts as we are sensitive to His leading, His guiding.

The result of walking in the Spirit is that you will become more like Jesus!

Now here's the thing; if we truly walked continually in the Spirit then we would not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

But inside these bodies of flesh there is a war going on between the flesh and the spirit, a battle of the wills you might say.

Our will and the Lord's will for our lives.

Think of our bodies as having two hard drives, one that is programmed according to the flesh nature and the other according to the Spirit. Thus, we must choose which drive to use, each will work but the outcome will be completely different.

You can't live off the flesh drive or make it work better. God wants you to work off the Spirit drive and as you use the Spirit drive, it will make the flesh drive better and as we receive our new bodies, we get an upgrade of resurrection proportions!

One writer summed it up for us like this. He wrote,

In his Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan describes Interpreter's house, which Pilgrim entered during the course of his journey to the Celestial City.

The parlor of the house was completely covered with dust, and when a man took a broom and started to sweep, he and the others in the room began to choke from the great clouds of dust that were stirred up.

The more vigorously he swept, the more suffocating the dust became.

Then Interpreter ordered a maid to sprinkle the room with water, with which the dust was quickly washed away.

Interpreter explained to Pilgrim that the parlor represented the heart of an unsaved man, that the dust was original sin, the man with the broom was the law, and the maid with the water was the gospel.

His point was that all the law can do with sin is to stir it up.

Only the gospel of Jesus Christ can wash it away. “The power of sin is the law,” Paul declares; “but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 15:56).

- John MacArthur

Exactly! The Law can only stir up the dust of sin in our life, but it is the water of the Holy Spirit that cleans it up as we surrender our lives to Him and walk according to the Spirit’s leading! But never forget that there is this battle between the flesh and the Spirit and Paul is going to show what both look like as we read on. First, he will deal with the works of the flesh and then the fruit of the Spirit.

VERSES 19-21

Here's the thing. God has given the human body legitimate drives for the survival of man and the perpetuation of the human race. There is the air drive, the water drive, the food drive, the sleep drive, the sex drive etc.

And when kept under the control of the Holy Spirit they are normal, legitimate and beneficial.

However, when these physical drives are allowed to be controlled by man's sinful fallen nature, they become perverted and destructive and this is what the Bible calls the "*lusts of the flesh.*"

You see, thirst becomes drunkenness; hunger becomes gluttony; sleep becomes laziness; and sex becomes immorality.

And in this section Paul lists the works of the flesh into four different categories: *sensual sins, religious sins, interpersonal sins, and social sins.*

This is not all-inclusive, but it does cover a broad spectrum of fleshly sins that are works of the flesh. So let's look at what Paul has to say about these works of the flesh.

SENSUAL SINS:

Adultery speaks of a violation of the marriage covenant by sexual immorality, having sex with someone who is not your spouse.

Fornication comes from the Greek word PORNEIA and it speaks of sexual immorality in the broad sense. Sex before and outside of marriage is the idea here.

Uncleanness is more of a general sexual uncleanness, the opposite of purity.

Lewdness speaks of a person who flaunts their immorality.

RELIGIOUS SINS:

Idolatry is the worship of any god except the Lord God.

Sorcery is from the Greek word PHARMAKEIA from which we get our English word “pharmacy.” This speaks of witchcraft and the use of drugs, especially hallucinogens that open the door to the spirit world.

INTERPERSONAL SINS:

Hatred is an attitude of the heart that may express itself in outward actions.

Contentions speak of having a combative or argumentative spirit.

Jealousies speak of desiring to have what is not ours.

Outbursts of wrath speak of a sudden outburst of anger, losing control.

Selfish ambitions speak of a service that is done for power or profit, only for you.

Dissensions carry with it the idea of flying apart, dividing.

Heresies deal with dividing over our opinions.

Envy carries with it the idea of being bitter because someone else has what we want.

Murders speak for itself. And I would include abortion in here as well. It is any premediated murder!

SOCIAL SINS:

Drunkness speaks of allowing alcohol to impart your judgment, not just passing out drunk!

Revelries speak of unrestrained partying, no control!

AND THE LIKE:

Paul lets us know that if you are into something that is not mentioned, and it is not of God, it is still wrong; it is still a work of the flesh.

You see, it is not just our actions that we battle the flesh with, but also our thinking.

Paul put it this way in Romans 8:5-8, **“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”**

It is a battle, so don't set your mind on the things of the flesh, but on the things of the Spirit!

And here is the bottom line. If these things are in your life, habitually speaking, then you will not inherit the kingdom of God, not because works save us, but they just are evidence of who is in control of our lives, who is on the throne of our hearts, a battle of the wills!

Works don't save us but how we live out our faith show others if we are really saved! That is the key!

Boice put it this way in regards to this word **“practice”**, “The tense of the verb (present) indicates a habitual continuation in the fleshly sins rather than an isolated lapse, and the point is that those who continually practice such sins give evidence of having never received God's Spirit.”

And Morris wrote regarding this word, **“practice”**, that it “represents a present participle, ‘people doing such things’, and it carries the implication that they do them constantly.”

But make no mistake about it, we as Christians still battle the flesh on a daily basis and what will be manifested in our lives will be who we surrender to, the flesh or the Spirit!

I like the way that Warren Wiersbe sums this up for us. He wrote, “The contrast between works and fruit is important. A machine in a factory works, and turns out a product, but it could never manufacture fruit. Fruit must grow out of life, and, in the case of the believer, it is the life of the Spirit (Gal. 5:25). When you think of “works” you think of effort, labor, strain, and toil; when you think of “fruit” you think of beauty, quietness, the unfolding of life. The flesh produces “dead works” (Heb. 9:14), but the Spirit produces living fruit. And this fruit has in it the seed for still more fruit (Gen. 1:11).”

That is what we will look at next, the fruit of the Spirit!

VERSES 22-23

Notice that “**works**” is pleural and “**fruit**” is singular because the fruit of the Spirit is love and born out of that love are eight characteristics, eight attributes that are manifested in our lives. These qualities should be found in every believer’s life. That love that God has poured into our lives is seen in so many different ways and this is fruit that is born in a life of a believer who surrenders to the Spirit and crucifies the flesh!

Now the word “**love**” is AGAPE in the Greek and it speaks of unconditional love and if we walk in the Spirit, then unconditional love will flow from our lives in joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control!

Let’s take a look at these things that we see in a believer’s life or should see.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS LOVE AND MANIFESTED WITH:

Joy is based in God and thus, that joy can never be taken away.

Peace speaks of peace with God, peace with our fellow man, peace through the storms of life, the situations we face. It is not a freedom from trouble but a peace through it.

Longsuffering speaks of tolerance, that you don't allow others to get the better of you, but you have a patient spirit.

Kindness speaks of having a tenderness towards others.

Goodness speaks of a sweetness, generosity.

Faithfulness speaks of being trustworthy in all that you do, that you can be counted upon.

Gentleness speaks of being meek.

Self-control speaks of restraining passions and appetites.

And please understand that the Law can't manifest these qualities in us, only the Holy Spirit can. Why is that?

Because they are not natural for the natural man, but as we submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit, He will manifest these things in us.

You can try to force people to act like this, but it will not be real, it will not work, it will not last!

VERSES 24-26

When Paul says, “**. . . those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh . . .**” the verb tense here indicates something that happened decisively in the past. It actually occurred at the time of our conversion. (Romans 6)

What does that mean because we still have problems with sin?

This is speaking positionally of those who have received Jesus as Lord and Savior.

But it doesn’t mean that all that I am positionally in Christ automatically carries over into the practical matters of daily living.

Thus, don’t entertain the flesh, feed the flesh, play with the flesh, but crucify the flesh nature with its passions and desires to control your life.

Here we must take the action and place that flesh nature on the cross to be crucified, we must be willing to give it to the Lord.

And then, as we look at Galatians 5:25, we see the word, “**If**” and it actually means, “**Since.**”

Since we live in the Spirit (have eternal life), let us now “*walk in the Spirit*” every day.

That is what Paul is saying, he is telling us to “**walk in the Spirit**” and the word he uses for “**walk**” means “to keep in step with the Spirit” or be in tune to the Spirit’s leading, guiding. Follow Him, walk with Him, it should be the practice of our life.

And then Paul concludes this section with a warning, not to be conceited in your walk but yield to the Holy Spirit and allow the fruit of the Spirit to flow from your life!

Let me leave you this evening with these words from Paul in Ephesians 5:13-21, as he tells us, **“But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: ‘Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.’ See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.”**

Let us wake-up and be wise and as we submit to the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit, *LOVE*, will flow from our lives and manifest itself in many ways!

And, as you have seen, this whole chapter deals with examining our own lives. You see, these issues of life, these problems we tend to blame on others, it is their fault.

And thus, everything would be fine if everyone just treated us right and if the circumstances of life just got better.

But that is not what Paul has shown us in this chapter. The problem is within us and the only way to deal with that problem is by the Spirit of God.

Yes, we need to be delivered from the evil man, but that evil man is us!

What we must do is yield our lives to the Holy Spirit and **“... Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”** Galatians 5:16.