

Gal 13 – The Battle of Spirit v. Flesh, PT 1 - Gal 5:16-18

The book of Galatians is all about our Freedom in Christ –

& in the last 2 msgs Paul's been warning us about things that can destroy that Freedom that Christ has made us Free for –

2 wks ago the warning was to not let our Liberty to be turned into **Legalism**
last wk the warning was to not let our Liberty to be turned into **License**

& both were very powerful warnings about the Pendulum swinging too far to either extreme – Legalism or License

& we learned - whether we're swinging out of balance to **Legalism**
(trying to make ourselves "Right" with God)
or whether we're swinging to **License**
(Serving our "Sin Nature") . . .

both extremes are actually Serving our Flesh !

& so – whether it's **Legalism** or **License** – the Battle we are in is
SPIRIT vs. FLESH - & that's exactly what this text focuses on

Let's Pray

The Christian Life can be broken down into 2 'Very Broad' areas –
Justification, & **Sanctification**

The moment you are Born-Again – by receiving Christ as your Savior thru Faith – AT that moment - you are **Justified**

& **Jesus Christ** is the **Primary Person** of the God-Head Who enables
(makes possible) your **Justification** . . .

On the other hand - your **Sanctification** is the growing process that begins the moment after your new birth *(& continues today)* . . .

& **the Holy Spirit** is the **Primary Person** of the God-Head Who enables
(makes possible) your **Sanctification**

DEFINE: Sanctification = Lit “to separate” or “to dedicate”

It is: “Separation **from** the world & Dedication **to** God” –

1 of the best vs's - Sanctification - is 2Cor 3:18

18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The more we **behold** the Glory of the Lord –

The more we are **transformed** into His very Image – from glory to glory –

By the **Spirit of the Lord**

That is the Sanctification Process - & **the Agent** - The **Source** - the **Power**
of our **Sanctification** . . . is **the Holy Spirit**

Today in Galatians – we'll see that w/o the Holy Spirit - we have **NO HOPE**
of **Sanctification** - - of being transformed into His image !

John MacArthur Jr: A believer can no more **Sanctify** Himself than he could
have **saved** himself in the 1st place. He cannot live the Christian life by his own
resources any more than he could have saved himself by his own resources

The Christian life of Sanctification **simply** sated;

“a life lived under the direction and in the power of the Holy Spirit” –

that may be **Sanctification Simply Stated** - - - But as I like to Say . . .

“It's Simple – but it's not Easy”

In fact – It is actually WAR!

It is a **BATTLE** to live your life under the direction & power of the Holy Spirit
the Bible likens the Christian Life to a Battle more than anything else

The **Reward in Eternity** is more than we could *ever Fathom* – but at times the **Battle in this life**, can be more than we *ever Expected* . . .

& that Battle is most often described as
*the Battle between the **Spirit & the Flesh**–*

It's a battle that occurs in every Christian - & altho we've been given the **positional** & **ultimate** victory over our flesh IN Jesus Christ
But it is still the Flesh we must battle on a day-to-day basis

Our Flesh has been “*Rendered Inoperative*” **Rom 6** says –
but it has not been completely “*Done away with*” until we're in Glory

& so **the ongoing battle** between the Spirit & the Flesh –
is perfectly introduced for us in **Gal 5:16**;

Gal 5:16

16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

When Paul says “*Walk IN the Spirit*” – he means the person of the **Holy Spirit**

The Person that enables us to **be Righteous before God IS** Jesus Christ . . .
The Person that enables us to **Live for God IS** the Holy Spirit

Our *Justification* **IS IN** Jesus Christ (*Our Righteous Position*)
Our *Sanctification* **IS IN** the Holy Spirit (*Our Righteous Living*)

Being identified **IN Christ** – **IS** our **Justification**
Being identified **IN the Holy Spirit** – **IS** our **Sanctification**

The **Holy Spirit** is the **Only One** capable of producing Godly living in us –
True Godly living **DOES NOT** come from *Our Own Efforts* –

& pls hear this - **Religious Living** – Done in our own flesh . . .
DOES NOT pass as **Walking in the Spirit** . . .

Because as Paul says in Rom 7:18

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; . . .

& that **includes** *Religious Living* in the strength of our own flesh

W/O the Holy Spirit's Filling and Empowering of a Christian :

we cannot be **Set-Apart for God** – AND

we cannot **Walk in the Spirit** . . .

& *Walking in the Spirit is Mandatory* – for overcoming the power of the Flesh

For more study on the Holy Spirit – **Get the Holy Spirit series** –
we've got to understand the critical role of the Holy Spirit

Now – Let's Re-Read Gal 5:16 – & look at the word "WALK":

16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

Word "**Walk**" means **LIT:** "to make one's way" **OR** "to regulate one's life"

But - The word "*Walk*" is **a Verb** -

& so in the Geek - it has as many as **5 "aspects"** that go with it . . .

3 of those "aspects" are **Tense** – **Voice** – **Mood**;

*Tense = **Present** = "Do it Now"*

*Voice = **Active** = "Continue to Do it"*

*Mood = **Imperative** = "A Command requiring Obedience"*

So in this word we have God **Commanding** us – **Now** & **Continually** -
to **Regulate** our life (make our way) – **IN the Spirit**

Now – does it **seem to be** a bit of a "*Paradox*" to anyone that all of Galatians
has **taught us** that our *Freedom In Christ* – is **ALL GOD'S** work . . .

& **now** we have this word "**WALK**" - - a **Command** requiring **Obedience** –

& it's a Command for us to **DO** something - & not only **Do It NOW**
But **Continue** to **Do It** indefinitely . . .

Trust me - Paul is **not Switching** back over to the "*Work's camp*" . . .

The **POWER** for the **Justifying** work of God in our lives – is Jesus Christ
The **POWER** for the **Sanctifying** work of God in our lives – is the Holy Spirit

But in both *Supernatural, Eternal works*,
We have a **Role** of **Response** – a **Role** of **Commitment**

The Holy Spirit is **the Power** – to overcome our **Flesh** & this **World**
But we are **the Choice** as to whether our lives
will be **Regulated by His Power** - - **Or Not !!**

THAT is the **balance** between **God's Power** & **Our Effort** . .

HE is all the **Power** – But **WE** are all the **choice** –
We either **Cap** that *Power* – or we **Release** that *Power* – **BY OUR CHOICE**

my **Personal Definition** of "*Walking in the Spirit*" . . . ;
Constantly (*Moment-by-Moment, Thought-by-Thought*) **CHOOSING**;
to **regulate** our lives by the **Supernatural Power** of the **Holy Spirit** living in us

it is Critical for us to understand what **Walking in the Spirit** means !!

Because **You, I, & Every Christian** – are actually **AT WAR** - - -
& more than anything else - That Battle is "**The Spirit vs's the Flesh**"

Every **Moment**, Every **Thought** – We're either **Winning** or **Losing** the **Battle** !

& so again - the Definition of WALKING IN THE SPIRIT ;

Constantly (*Moment-by-Moment, Thought-by-Thought*) **CHOOSING**;
to **regulate** our lives by the **Supernatural Power** of the **Holy Spirit** living in us

& **not only** does *Walking in the Spirit* give us **Victory** over *the Flesh* –
but it is the **Process** – the very **Source** – of Our **SANCTIFICATION**

Now w/ all of that – Let’s Re-Read Gal 5:16

*16 I say then: **Walk** in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*

That is not only an introduction to the **Greatest Battle** in the Christian life
But it is **ALSO** – the **Secret to Victory** in that Battle

Some of you would say about now . . . *that’s a lot easier said than done*
WHY is that ??? - - - Well, the **next Vs.** answers that question for us . . .

Gal 5:17

*17 For the flesh **lusts against** the **Spirit**, and the Spirit against the **flesh**; and these are contrary to one another, **so that** you do not do the things that you wish.*

Why is it – that we **DO NOT do** the things that we wish we’d do ???
Because . . . **[re-read Vs.]**

Let’s back up - & get **some Definitions** . . .

“THE FLESH” = in the Christian Life - is our Old Nature –
that Nature that **Leans** Toward **SIN** –
that Nature that has a **Tendency** Toward **SIN**

It is the Flesh that stands against the Spirit’s work in the Life of a believer –
Once we are saved – **The Flesh** becomes our **#1 Enemy**

“THE SPIRIT” = is the New Nature – **LIT** it is the Holy Spirit living in Us –
It is the **Supernatural Power** of **Christ Living in us** **IN** **the Person** of
the **Holy Spirit**

The Spirit is the **Comforter** – the **Guide** – the **Power** – AND He is the Person
of the God-Head **Primarily responsible** for our **Sanctification**

We also **have a 2 Msg set on the Holy Spirit** you can ask for (free) ;

- 1) Is the Holy Spirit a Who or a What ?
- 2) The Role of the Holy Spirit

If God is Commanding us to **Walk in the Spirit** (& *He is*)
then we really should Who the Spirit is - & What He does . . .

this **2 msg set** - & the **Holy Spirit series** – will do that for you

so – we’ve looked at 2 Definitions (the Flesh & the Spirit) –
& in **Gal 2:20** we see how we **should Relate** to both of these “Natures”

Gal 2:20

20 I have been crucified with Christ;

That is the **Flesh** – Positionally Crucified – Rendered Inoperative
it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;

That is LIT the Person of the **Holy Spirit** living in us for Power & Victory
and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, . . .

THAT – is **Walking in the Spirit**

let’s go back to **Gal 5:17** & focus on the battle

Gal 5:17

*17 For the flesh **lusts against** the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, **so that** you do not do the things that you wish.*

We understand the **Spirit** - & the **Flesh** - - -

& now - The Battle lies in the words “**Lusts Against**”

“LUST” = is LIT – “*Strong Desire*” – but notice it says;

*“the flesh **lusts against** the Spirit, and the Spirit [lusts] against the flesh”*

Meaning the Flesh has **Strong Desire** against the Spirit -
& the Spirit has **Strong Desire** against the Flesh – Right there inside of you !

If you are a Christian today – This Battle is Going on inside you !

Some say it's like **two trees** with the same Root system –

One tree is the **flesh** - & we must make sure to **NEVER** nourish it -
so that it bears **NO Fruit** . . .

While at the same time we **MUST** nourish the tree that is the Spirit –
so that it will bear **MUCH Fruit** . . . **& therein is the Battle**

Some say we are a **Redeemed** "Saint" – Living in an **UN-Redeemed** "Body"
& there is obviously a Battle there

Are you starting to see it a little more clearly . . . ??

Let's see how this **Battle** worked out in Paul's own life . . .

Rom 7:18-25

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me [Spirit], but how to perform what is good I do not find [flesh].

19 For the good that I will to do [Spirit], I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice [flesh].

20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me [flesh].

21 I find then a law, that evil [flesh] is present with me, the one who wills to do good [Spirit].

22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man [Spirit].

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members [flesh].

24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

25 I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God [Spirit], but with the flesh the law of sin [flesh].

Now – I could teach for a long time on that passage -

& that's the passage we'll be digging into **this Wed Night**

But for today – this is 1 of the best passages describing the Battle
you and I are in - between the Spirit & the Flesh . . .

Now – w/ that **Vivid struggle** from Paul in Mind – turn back to **Gal 5** . . .

If you are a Christian today – ***you must know*** –
there is a **Battle** raging inside of you - between the **Spirit** & the **Flesh**

You have the ability to be controlled by **Either** the *Spirit* **OR** the *Flesh* . . .

At *any given moment* you can be controlled by **Either One** . . .
BUT – you **CANNOT** be controlled by **BOTH** at the same time

Remember – these Two “Natures” are at war with each other –
V.17 says they have “Strong Desires Against” each other . . .

& at any given moment in your Christian Life ;
ONE is **Alive**, & the OTHER one is **Dormant** . . .

& *in that statement* is the **secret to Victory** in this Battle . . .
Let me say it just a little differently . . .

WHEN one of these “natures” is **Alive** – the Other one is (by default) **Dormant**

That is exactly what we see in Gal 5:16

16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

& remember our definition for “Walk”;

Constantly (*Moment-by-Moment, Thought-by-Thought*) CHOOSING;
to regulate our lives by the *Supernatural Power* of the *Holy Spirit* living in us

You **don't have** to have the Power in yourself *to overcome the Flesh* –

All you have is a **CHOICE** - & **IF** you will Constantly **CHOOSE** to
regulate your life by the Supernatural Power of the Holy Spirit –
you will (by default) crucify that strong desire of your flesh

You don't have to overcome your Flesh by gritting your teeth & fighting w/ everything you have in you to beat it . . . *(that'll never do it)*

All you have to do is **WALK in the Spirit** – & you will (by default) **not Fulfill** the *strong desire* (lust) of the **Flesh** . . .

In fact – overcoming your flesh by gritting your teeth & fighting against it is (in essence) what we had to do when we were “**Under the Law**”

Because without the Holy Spirit – following the law to subdue the Flesh is actually just a “Work of the Flesh”

But “Walking in the Spirit” takes care of that too . . .

Gal 5:18

*18 But if you are **led by the Spirit**, you are not under the law.*

This phrase “*Led by the Spirit*” is a similar picture as “*Walk in the Spirit*” (V.16) but “**Led**” actually has more of the idea of “**VOLUNTARY SUBMISSION**”

If you will “Voluntarily Submit” your Life to the Leading of the Spirit – you will not be “Under” the Law . . . WHY? . . .

because Rom 8:4 says:

4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

If you are a Christian today – there is a Battle going on between the Spirit & your Flesh . . .

But – it's a battle Jesus Christ has Won the Victory over – “*On Your Behalf*”
Gal 5:1 - “It is for Freedom that Christ has set you Free”

All you have to do is **WALK** in the Spirit – & you will be FREE from the Bondage of the Flesh

Let's Pray