

Jesus (Mk 9:35), "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

Paul (1 Cor 9:19), For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, (Why?) that I might win the more;

Jesus (Mt 20:28), For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve,

Gal 5:14

For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Paul has been telling the Galatians

- don't go back to living under the law.

Why would you put yourself under that burden of

- Trying to keep the law
- when you can live under grace.

Then he says in verse 14, love your neighbor as yourself.

No one has to be told,

- "You'd better love yourself!"

Who is our neighbor?

Matt 5:43-47

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?

Jesus says to love your enemies.

- This is a present tense verb,
- implying an ongoing process

John 15:19

19 If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Those opposed to the gospel will hate followers of Jesus.

- But Jesus says to love them anyway.

Jesus gave us three commands of action in Matt 5:

- and all 3 are in the present tense,
- indicating a continuous pattern of action.

In verse 44 He says to “bless” those that curse us. The Greek word is “eulogéō” and means to speak well of.

This includes us praying for God’s intervention in their life.

Secondly, Jesus said to “do good” to those who hate us.

And third, “pray” for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.

Other verbs used in verse 44 (curse, hate and persecute).

- They are also in the present tense.
- This tells us that this is the norm,
- not a rare occasion.

15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! (consumed - to take away or to destroy)

In the case of the Galatians some were turning from the Lord

- and began to follow the false teachers.

Notice the contrast and increased intensity between verse 14 and 15.

In Verse 14, Paul says to love your neighbor as yourself.

Then in verse 15 he speaks of biting, devouring and consuming one another.

We are in a constant battle

- between the flesh and the spirit.

Paul encourages the church to walk in the Spirit!

Gal 5:16-26

16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. (to walk about, to order one's behavior or manner of life)

17 For the flesh lusts (wars) 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. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

No one in here desires to be at war! We desire peace.

The theme of this chapter is to stand fast in the liberty by which Christ has made us free.

In verse 13 Paul said you:

13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, (don't use your freedom in Christ as an opportunity to sin)

So the Galatians had the mindset that

- removing the law would cause them to fall into sin

Paul says, no, you have the power of the Holy Spirit.

If you have not tapped into the power of the Holy Spirit, you are short-changing yourself!

Many Christians live in spiritual poverty.

Too many people today are walking around powerless and trying to fight their battles in the strength of their flesh. We need the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor 12:13

13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free – and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. (That's the Spirit of God)

So many of God's resources are untapped!

Our daily prayer should be that the Lord fill us with the power of His Holy Spirit!

Jesus said, you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;

2 Cor 10:4-6

4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Our battles are spiritual battles.

Satan doesn't appear before us and ask if we're ready to fight.

- He appears as an angel of light.

The battles we face in the spiritual world

- are against an unseen enemy.

We learn at a very young age

- the difference between right and wrong.

Romans 1 tells us that man will be without excuse because God's attributes are clearly seen.

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

- When we think of flesh in modern day terms,
- we think of our skin, what we see.

But the term "flesh" is not speaking of our flesh as we know it.

The Greek word for flesh is the word "Sárx or sarkós."

- The Greek is sometimes used to describe the flesh as we know it,
- but it often speaks of the "old nature"

The Psalmist said in Ps 58:3

3 The wicked are estranged from the womb;
They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.

We don't need to be taught to speak lies.

(Eph 2:3) we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Paul says that we are children of wrath by nature.

- We don't naturally love God.
- We don't naturally have this desire
- to do what is good.

Paul says the opposite:

Rom 7:15-21

15 For what I am doing I do not understand, because what I want to do, this I do not practice, but what I hate, this I do. 16 But if what I do not want to do, this I do, I agree with the law that it is good. 17 But now I am no longer the one doing it, but sin that lives in me. 18 For I know that good does not live in me, that is, in my flesh. For the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. 19 For the good that I want to do, I do not do, but the evil that I do not want to do, this I do. 20 But if what I do not want to do, this I am doing, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin that lives in me.

21 Consequently, I find the principle with me, the one who wants to do good, that evil is present with me.

Rom 7:24-25

24 Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself with my mind am enslaved to the law of God, but with my flesh I am enslaved to the law of sin.

Romans 8 goes on to say that those controlled by the flesh cannot please God. But those controlled by the Spirit are of God. (Each of us is controlled by one or the other, the flesh or the Spirit)

The following is a list of sins which gratify the flesh.

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Then Paul lists that which glorifies God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.

If we're being led by the Spirit as Paul says in verse 18

- then we will produce these attributes
- and we will glorify God.

Does this mean that as a Christian I will never have struggles? NO!

So what is the key to overcoming the flesh?

- We have to starve the flesh, the sinful desires.
- And we have to feed the Spirit within us.

Let's take a closer look at the partial list of the old nature.

It's interesting that Paul sort of categorizes the sins. One category is the sensual sins which are, adultery and fornication. First is adultery, (someone married and having a sexual relationship or an encounter with someone outside of their marriage), fornication, (derived from the Greek word porneia, we get the English word pornography from this Greek word.)

The Word Study dictionary says that fornication as a sexual vice was common before the time of Moses and was grossly prevalent in Egypt.

Example:

Gen 39:7

7 And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."

So, fornication can be the sexual acts

- between two unmarried people
- enjoying the benefits of a married couple.

uncleanness (is a word that can be used when speaking of the pus of an uncleaned wound. It's also a word that was used of someone unfit to come before God because of the contamination in his or her life) Uncleanness can be anything that isn't pure before God.

and lewdness.

- Those having no restraints.

Then in verse 20 Paul mentions spiritual sins.

- Idolatry was prevalent in the ancient world.
- It's anything that replaces God in a person's life,

sorcery, (derived from the Greek word pharmakeia, we get the English word pharmacy from this Greek word.

- It speaks of any drug whether for medicinal purposes
- or any poisonous drugs.

Next are the social sins,

- these are sins which primarily express themselves
- in how we treat others.

God cares about how we treat others.

Paul uses more words to describe these interpersonal sins than the others.

- This shows us that the Lord really does care about
- how we treat one another.

Those sins are hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, finally he says, and the like.

If we want to be led by the Spirit,

- we have to live by the Spirit.