

The Fruit of the Spirit

[22] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Gal. 5:22-23 ESV)

3 trains of life are available for the Christian: 1) Religious law, 2) human nature, or 3) the Spirit of God.

THE TRAIN YOU TAKE MATTERS.

The train you hop on matters, because it's the train you attach yourself to that will determine the outcome of your life. In Galatians 5, I picture it, as we have three trains. These three trains represent ways by which you can live your life as a Christian - as a believer in Jesus. One train represents religious law. We could call it legalism. We could call it law based justification before God. Train one represents religious law. Train two represents human nature. We could call it the flesh - living by our fleshly desires. And train three represents the Spirit of God.- living by the Spirit - walking by the Spirit.

Why? because the train produces the results.

Train #1 - Living by religious law produces no results. **5:1-12**

Paul's argument in the New Testament repeatedly is: Religious Law keeping is not the answer. Religious laws and commandments are like a mirror. A mirror can only show you dirt on your face, but the mirror cannot clean the dirt off your face. You need the cleansing power of something other than the law with its ordinances and commandments. You need the cleansing power of the blood of Christ upon you that He shed for you on that cross.

The Good News from Almighty God to sinful humanity is not: You have failed to keep my commandments, but if you stop (or try to stop) failing to keep my commandments and prove yourself worthy, then I will save you.

The good news of God to sinful humanity is this: You have failed to keep My commandments (Rom. 3:23), but I am merciful towards you (Rom. 11:32). I have compassion on you (Matt. 9:36; Tit. 3:5). I love you (Rom. 5:8). I'm offering to save you from your failures and their consequences (1 Tim. 1:16), not by anything you do or have done, but by My grace (Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Tit. 3:5; 2 Tim. 1:9). Your sin against Me has put you in a great debt to Me (Rom. 3:9-19), but My Son upon that cross has paid the debt for you (John 19:13; 1 Tim. 2:6). If you put your faith in Him (John 3:16), I will save you eternally (John 6:47) and instantly (Eph. 1:13) by My grace (Eph. 2:5). I will save you based on the work Jesus did for you, not based on the work you have done (Rom 4:4-5; 5:19).

Train #2 - Living by human nature (the flesh) produces gross results. **5:13-21**

Freedom in Christ means being free from slavery to your sins. Sin does not free you. It will trap, but it is faith in Christ that will set you free from sin.

So let's say you've decided to stay away from train #1. You want to stay away from living by religious law. Legalism isn't the answer. It won't take you anywhere. So now you find yourself considering one of the two trains that are moving. Let's say you are grasping grace finally. "I am saved. I am eternally forgiven of my sins. I have a clean conscience before God. I am made right with God. I am in Christ by faith. I am a Christian. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. But now what? I don't have a religious rule book to keep... What do I do now?"

Well, here comes the war within the Christian's soul - the Spirit against the flesh. They are opposed to each other. As long as we are on this side of heaven, this is an unending battle in the heart of the Christian. Who wins this battle? The one you yield to.

The list of in 5:19-21 are gross sins in the eyes of God, and that is our human nature. We are not good by nature. We are gross. The train of the human nature leads to gross sin.

Paul warns us: don't hop on that train. It is the train of those who do not inherit the Kingdom of God. It's the pattern and lifestyle of people who are not saved. But if you are saved, then God offers you a better train. The train of the Spirit of God. You don't have to be a slave to that train of sin anymore.

Train #3 - Living by the Spirit of God produces the best results. 5:22-26

To the Christian: God saved you from your sins unto a much better life. Focusing on keeping a list of commandments will result in nothing. Yielding to the flesh will result in you committing gross sins, but yielding to the Spirit of God produces the best results of all.

Love: agape love. It's the kind of love God offered us on the cross. It's willing to do what is best for someone else even though it costs you greatly.

Joy: Deep-seated gladness in your heart. No circumstance will affect your joy, because joy is something that comes from knowing all is well between you and God.

Peace: It's the one who knows that God is leading me. He is guiding me. He has put me in this situation. He has planted me here. He is in charge, and He has a good plan for me and for His glory.

Patience: Suffering something for a long time without going crazy. Patience helps you enjoy the journey instead of demand the results now.

Kindness: Gracious and benevolent toward others. Have you ever walked away from talking with a stranger thinking, "thank goodness that person was at least a jerk to me."?

Goodness: Not only loving what is good and abhorring what is evil, but genuinely wanting what is best for others - wanting to do good to others - to do what is good and pleasing to the Lord.

Faithfulness: This isn't just being known by our genuine faith in the God of the Bible, but also it's becoming reliable people - trustworthy people. A dependable person is one who God entrusts to with great tasks in this life and the next.

Gentleness: They are approachable - hospital - considerate of others. Other translations say meekness. Meekness is often described as power under control. Strength handled well.

Self-control: The ability to master one's own life. Sin is not rampant in that person's life. Temptations are there. Mental battles are on going, but sin rarely sins. Living in the flesh is emotionally controlled, lustfully controlled, jealously controlled, selfishly controlled, but living by the Spirit is self controlled.

God is a God who saves by grace through faith and then sets you free (John 8:36). God guarantees and promises your eternal security and salvation by faith in Jesus, not by your works (Eph. 2:8-9; John 10:28). God purchased you for Himself out of the marketplace of sin and He's not going to put a leash of law on you (Acts 20:28).

Which free Christian do you want to be? True freedom, real safety, and full joy in Christ means staying close to your Master - dominated by love for Him and loyalty to Him - always putting yourself under your Master's control. That Christian is a safe, happy, and free Christian.

