



Fresh Start – Who is Leading You in Your Relationships?

James 1:23-25 (NIV)

“Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.”

Galatians 5:13-26 (NIV)

“You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

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

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.”

Consequences of the acts of the flesh

1. Strife

James 3:16 (KJV)

“where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.”

2. Influence decreases

2 Timothy 2:14 (NIV)

“Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen.”

3. You misrepresent Christ to our world

Matthew 5:13 (NIV)

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”

4. You harden other's hearts against truth

Romans 2:4 (NIV)

“... God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?”

5. Your heart becomes resistant to correction

Proverbs 5:12-14 (NIV)

“You will say, “How I hated discipline!

How my heart spurned correction!

I would not obey my teachers

or turn my ear to my instructors.

And I was soon in serious trouble...”

6. It poisons relationships

Proverbs 29:23 (NKJV)

“A man's pride will bring him low,

But the humble in spirit will retain honor.”

Benefits of the fruit of the Spirit.

1. Unity

Psalm 133:1,3 (NKJV)

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!”

“... For there the Lord commanded the blessing—
Life forevermore.”

2. Our influence grows

Matthew 5:14-16 (NIV)

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

3. We represent Christ well to our world

John 17:20-21 (NIV)

“... I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”

4. It opens people's hearts to receive God's truth

John 3:16-17 (NIV)

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”

5. We are open to receiving correction and instruction

Proverbs 9:9 (NIV)

“Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still;
teach the righteous and they will add to their learning.”

6. It cultivates relationships

Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV)

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!”

7. It will allow us to live life to the fullest

John 10:10 (NIV)

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”