



“The Passions in the Gospel”

Galatians 5:19-25

Theme: The “Fruit of the Spirit” is a set of spiritual passions inevitably present in believers.

Introduction: We live in an era when moral corruption is no longer considered shameful. Such corruption is likened to raw sewage that is best managed below ground in sealed pipes and guided to a treatment plant where it can be processed and properly neutralized. There has always been moral corruption – and such corruption has always been as bad as it currently is. However, what has changed is the management of that corruption – it has burst from the pipes and has overflowed into society with all its putridity and stench, spreading like a contagion, moral infection, and degeneracy. Like traipsing through excrement in the street, believers walk through our society whose depravity rises like an ooze, flowing into an unfordable stream. Advocacy of restraint is seen as oppression; pride has replaced shame; good is called evil and evil good; and normal is viewed as unnatural. We truly live in days where God is giving our society over to the desires of its collective hearts – removing His restraining hand as described in [Romans 1:18-32](#).

The reason for such moral corruption of course, is the sinful nature that prevails in each of us who are without the power of God’s indwelling Holy Spirit enabling us to walk in conformity to Jesus Christ in whom we have believed. Without the Holy Spirit, the flesh dominates and stimulates diversities of corruptions. Those who attempt of restrain the flesh through legalism soon discover that sin is merely masked, and corruption keeps percolates to the surface. Even believers who have truly known the grace of salvation can become lured to a management of their flesh that relies on their flesh, thereby quenching the Holy Spirit and resulting in fleshly indulgences. In our text, Paul provides us with the solution to overcoming our flesh and walking worthy of our confession of faith in Christ Jesus. In fact, Paul argues that “**the ‘Fruit of the Spirit’ is a set of spiritual passions inevitably present in believers.**”

I. THE SINFUL PASSIONS PITTED AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT – 5:19-21

A. The Inevitability of Sinful Passions – v. 19a

1. The context of our passage is Paul’s denunciation of attempting to accomplish righteousness by keeping the Law.
2. In God’s eyes, its an “all or nothing” pursuit – and law-keeping is impossible because of our flesh.
3. If you are relying on your flesh to deliver you from your flesh you are “severed from Christ” (a play on circumcision) and “fallen from grace” (**to change for the worse from a favorable condition**)– cp. v. 4.

4. As legalists object that if we are not under the obligation of the Law, there remains no controls on the life of a person who seeks to follow God through the liberty found in Christ, Paul responds that
 - a) *the Law does not arrest the power of the flesh; and*
 - b) *the antidote for sinful passion is replacing it with spiritual passion.*
5. The question then is asked: “From where does this spiritual passion come?”
6. Paul’s answer is “*If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.*” – v. 18.
7. He talks about the evidence of person walking according to the flesh by identifying “*the deeds of the flesh*” – in which we are all experienced – cp. [Ephesians 2:3](#).
8. Paul states: “*Now the deeds of the flesh are evident ...*” – meaning they are so readily known or universally recognized that all he must do is mention some of them and everyone will know to identify them as the inevitable experience of unregenerate living.
9. Not one person is ignorant that the “*deeds of the flesh*” spring from the baser element of humanity – what God calls the depravity of man’s nature.
10. Paul’s point is when a person relies on the Law to gain righteousness, the heart remains unaltered – and from the heart comes the real identity of a person – cp. [Matthew 15:19-20](#).

B. The Illustrations of Sinful Passions – vv. 19b-21a

1. Paul now provides a list that is illustrative and not exhaustive – notice what he says in v. 21 – “*... and things like these ...*”
2. It appears that the specific “*deeds of the flesh*” referenced are things with which the Galatian churches are wrestling.
3. They are broken into three categories:
 - a) **Sensual Sins of Immorality** – v. 19b
 - (1) **Immorality** [πορνεία] – Unlawful sexual intercourse including fornication (both pre-marital & extra-marital), adultery, homosexuality & lesbianism, bestiality, incest, and other copulative activities – cp. [Hebrews 13:4](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:3](#).
 - (2) **Impurity** [ἀκαθαρσία] – moral corruption, (literally the ooze of a fester) or impure sexuality; anything that would cause a person to be unclean – cp. [Romans 1:24](#); [Ephesians 4:19](#).
 - (3) **Sensuality** [ἀσέλγεια] – a lack of self-constraint causing conduct that violates what is considered socially acceptable; excessive morally; uninhibited sexual

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indulgence that disregards shame or how one's activities will affect (or infect) others, "pride" – 1 Peter 4:3; 2 Peter 2:7-9.

b) *Sins of Idolatry* – v. 20a

- (1) *Idolatry* [ειδωλολατρία] – a term that refers to bowing down to man-made images representing deity; and describes the heart and not simply the action – Colossians 3:5.
- (2) *Sorcery* [φαρμακεία] – the use of chemicals or narcotics to achieve a state of transcendence and mind-altered, elevated experiences designed to promote the mystical – Revelation 9:21; 21:8.

c) *Sins of Intemperance* – vv. 20b-21a

- (1) *Enmities* [ἔχθρα] – multiple hateful, hostile attitudes.
- (2) *Strife* [ἔρις] – a posture of contention by a position of opposition to others – the result of enmity.
- (3) *Jealousy* [ζήλος] – intense negative feelings toward another for their possessions, achievements, or successes, thinking you should have it instead.
- (4) *Outbursts of Anger* [θυμός] – (plural) – various indignations or unrestrained expressions of hostility aimed at what displeases or annoys.
- (5) *Disputes* [ἔριθειά] – an outbreak of selfishness, or selfish ambition promoting one's own interests over the interests of others – associated with "selfish ambition" – cp. Romans 2:8.
- (6) *Dissensions* [διχοστασία] – causing disagreements or discord with others.
- (7) *Factions* [αἵρεσις] – banding together with others who argue or object to other people – jumping on causes or bandwagons that divide between groups of people.
- (8) *Envy* [φθόνος] – the desire to deprive others of what they have – asserting they either are undeserving of it or accusing them of having what is not theirs.
- (9) *Drunkness* [μέθη] – unmeasured or indiscriminate use of alcohol causing the impairment of one's poise.

(10) *Carousing* [κῶμος] - excessive feasting including revelry resulting in rude or crude behavior; a part of the orgies that were commonly associated with idolatry and hedonism.

(11) Again, we recognize that these are not all of what manifests the flesh - and are merely illustrative - “... *and things like these ...*”

C. The Indictment of Sinful Passions - v. 21b

1. In listing these things, Paul makes it clear that those whose lives are characterized by such behavior¹ demonstrate that they are devoid of God's Spirit and therefore are not in Christ Jesus.
2. He states: “... *of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*”
3. Paul's point here is that you cannot be in Christ and devoted to such behaviors - cp. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.
4. It is not the occasional sin that is described here but the practice of such things - whereby you are so often repeating them that it is part of one's identity - cp. 1 John 3:4-10.

So What?

1. **Your flesh is too powerful to overcome with human effort.**
2. **Even seemingly “incidental” violations of God's Law condemn the soul forever.**
3. **Salvation is available to all who will look outside themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ who saves us from the power of our flesh and consequences of our sin.**

Part 2

God's kindness toward believers is astounding. Not only has He delivered us from the condemnation for sin and all the punishments associated with it, but He has also delivered us from the power of sin as well. We have the means by which we can truly change ... to be transformed from the depravity and debauchery once defining us into saints - people who are being progressively and steadily conformed to the nature and character of Jesus Christ! To accomplish this miraculous transformation God has provided unincalculable power in the Holy Spirit. The same Holy Spirit who moved upon the face of the deep to create the world in Genesis, who came upon Samson with supernatural power, who anointed David enabling Him to shepherd God's people Israel, who inspired the Scriptures through the prophets, who filled

¹ The ESV reads: “... those who do such things ...” but such a translation leaves unclear that it is not occasional, but characteristic that defines this behavior.

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Jesus with all wisdom and power, who fell upon the believers to indwell them when the church was born, who provided unmistakable signs and wonders through the Apostles is the same Holy Spirit who is given to every sinner who comes to Jesus Christ by faith. His indwelling presence becomes the resource enabling the transformation we all yearn to experience. The power to overcome our flesh is not something mustered by human good-intentions, it is impossible for us to know true virtue, godly virtue unless someone help us, strengthening and empowering us to do what is impossible. This is the benefit provided by the benevolent God who loves us and intends to glorify Himself by our salvation.

II. THE SPIRITUAL PASSIONS PROVIDED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT - 5:22-23

A. The Inevitability of Spiritual Passions - v. 22a

1. In contrast to the *“deeds of the flesh”* is the *“fruit of the Spirit.”*
2. Even as it is impossible for the unbeliever to avoid the manifestation of the flesh, the believer cannot avoid the *“fruit of the Spirit.”*
3. It is called a singular *“fruit”* because it exists in all its features as one entity - meaning you cannot have one or two of these characteristics and not the others if it is truly generated *“... of the Spirit.”*
4. It is like one flower that has many petals - if you have the Holy Spirit, you will have the full “flower.”
5. This is the way that the power and presence of the Holy Spirit is manifested throughout the church age - gone is the initial manifestation of the Spirit through signs and wonders; now the wonder of the Spirit is found exclusively through the *“fruit of the Spirit.”*
6. This is completely unacceptable to some who are wanting to have quick confirmation to satisfy doubtful faith - since the *“fruit of the Spirit”* requires patience exhibition of genuine godliness and not merely incidental experiences.
7. The character described by the *“fruit of the Spirit”* is gained by a sinner by means of *“walking by the Spirit”* - cp. vv. 16, 18, 25.

- a) It involves gaining the “mind of the Spirit” whereby we understand the heart of God and respond to His heart with love for Him – cp. **Romans 8:27**.
- b) Exposure to the “mind of the Spirit” is gained through the Word of God wherein that mind is revealed – **2 Peter 1:20-21**.
- c) Walking by the Spirit is to rely upon the Holy Spirit to direct our steps according to the Word He has revealed and inspired in the Scriptures – **Romans 8:5**.
- d) Thus, to walk in the Spirit is to be a “doer of the Word” and not a hearer only – cp. **James 1:21-22**.

B. The Illustration of Spiritual Passions – vv. 22b-23a

1. The spiritual passions that demonstrate the genuine presence and influence of the Holy Spirit are not exhaustive but illustrative – as seen in the phrase in v. 23: “... *against such things there is no law.*”
2. The pairing of these spiritual passions is of considerable debate – is there an ability to categorize them?
3. Here is my suggestion:

a) Passions flowing from One’s Relationship with the Savior:

(1) “**Love**” [ἀγάπη] – the commitment to meeting the needs of another – of being willing to sacrifice oneself in preferring the welfare of another; something that results from God’s love for us and causes our love for both Him and others – **1 John 4:18-19**.

(a) Jesus is the standard for us – **John 15:13; 1 John 3:16**.

(b) This love comes from the Holy Spirit’s presence and ministry in our lives – cp. **Romans 5:5**.

(2) “**Joy**” [χαρά] – the gladness of heart & soul resulting from the awareness that all is well with God; the inevitable sentiment of being truly reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ; not focused on circumstances but in relationship with God.

(a) Jesus is the standard for us – **Hebrews 12:2; John 15:11**.

(b) This joy comes from the Holy Spirit’s ministry in our lives – cp. **John 16:20-22; Romans 14:17; 1 Thessalonians 1:6**.

(3) “**Peace**” [εἰρήνη] – a tranquility of mind resulting from one’s awareness that hostility by God is resolved through the work of Christ and there remains no more wrath toward us.

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- (a) Jesus is the standard for us – the One who is the “Prince of Peace” – [Matthew 11:28-29](#).
- (b) It is the very peace that is known by Christ that He provides to us through His Spirit – [John 14:27](#); [Colossians 3:15](#), [Isaiah 26:3](#).

b) Passions flowing toward One’s Relationship to Saints

(1) **“Patience”** [μακροθυμία] – lit. “great anger” – that is, it takes much to cause anger to flow and describes the state of remaining tranquil with awaiting an outcome; endurance in the face of provocation or injuries by another.

- (a) Jesus is the standard for us – [1 Peter 2:21-23](#); [1 Timothy 1:15](#).
- (b) This long-suffering is a product of the prevailing ministry of God’s Spirit in our lives – [Colossians 1:9-11](#).

(2) **“Kindness”** [χρηστότης] – the quality of being helpful or beneficial to others.

- (a) Jesus is the standard for us – [Matthew 11:28-29](#).
- (b) It is the product of the Holy Spirit in our lives – cp. [2 Corinthians 6:6](#); [Ephesians 4:32](#).

(3) **“Goodness”** [ἀγαθωσύνη] – a generous disposition seeking the welfare of another person.

- (a) Jesus is the standard for us – [Luke 6:9-10](#).
- (b) It is the product of the Holy Spirit in our lives – [Galatians 6:10](#).

c) Passions flowing toward One’s Relationship to Sinners

(1) **“Faithfulness”** [πίστις] – the quality of evoking confidence or truth; reliability, fidelity, and assurance.

- (a) Jesus is the standard for us – [John 4:34](#); [17:4](#).
- (b) Such faithfulness and loyalty to the will of God in reaching out with the Gospel is energized by the Holy Spirit – cp. [Acts 1:8](#); [Revelation 2:10](#).

(2) **“Gentleness”** [πραΰτης] – not being impressed by a sense of one’s self-importance; seeing oneself as undeserving of special favor; humility and courtesy toward others – [Galatians 6:1](#).

- (a) Jesus is the standard for us – [Matthew 11:29](#).
 - (b) When we are walking by the Spirit, we do not view ourselves as “better,” or “superior” to other sinners – but yearn to see them delivered from the oppression caused by their sin – cp. [2 Timothy 2:23; Titus 3:1-3](#).
- (3) **“Self-Control”** [ἐγκράτεια] – the restraint of one’s emotions, impulses, or desires.
- (a) Jesus is the standard for us – He was never guilty of anything that was in excess or out of harmony with the will of God.
 - (b) Instead of being “out of control” which many involved in the Pentecostal or Charismatic heresies claim to be a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit actually promotes “self-control” – [1 Corinthians 9:25](#).

C. The Impunity of Spiritual Passions – v. 23b

1. There are two ways to look at this statement by Paul – “... *against such things there is no law.*”
2. First, it could be a statement of irony – “Those of you who are bent on Law-keeping, saying that living by grace is license, there are no laws being broken when the Holy Spirit generates such virtue!”
3. Second, it could be a statement of denial that the law cannot produce such virtue; the law cannot even restrain the flesh let alone produce virtue.
4. The only way to produce such fruit is by walking by the Spirit whose fruit it is – cp. [2 Peter 1:8](#).

III. THE SEVERED PASSIONS PURGED THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT – 5:24-25

A. The Slaying of the Flesh – v. 24

1. As we listen to God’s Word, apply ourselves in submitting to the Holy Spirit, and obey from the heart, we recognize that our lives are not lived by means of our own accomplishment, but Christ’s – “*Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*”
2. His point is that we no longer consider ourselves sufficient or competent as the resource of righteousness – the ability to live righteously is gained only through the righteousness of Christ – made available to us at the cross.
3. What once we were dominated by has forever been killed – in Christ, by Christ, through Christ, and for Christ so that the life we now live is Christ’s life ... who was completely surrendered to the Holy Spirit – cp. [Galatians](#)

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2:20.

B. The Submission to the Spirit - v. 25

1. Hence, the only way we can know deliverance from the flesh is "*if we live by the Spirit, ...*" through faith in Jesus Christ.
2. And, if we truly "*live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit*" by yielding to the application of the Word by the Spirit to the Word of God that was inspired by the Spirit, illumined by the Spirit, and sourced in the mind of the Spirit.
3. "*Walking by the Spirit*" is not complicated – it is quite simple: Read God's Word, Apply God's Word, Do God's Word.
4. It requires honing the ability to sort through your thoughts to identify which thoughts are from God and which are not.

So What?

1. The Spirit of God is able to produce the godliness that evidences the new life He gives to us in Christ Jesus.
2. Our struggle in defeat to our flesh is directly proportionate to the degree we fail to walk in the Spirit.
3. Our ability to see godliness experientially is given by the Spirit as we are saturated with the truth of God's Word.

The "Fruit of the Spirit" is a set of spiritual passions inevitably present in believers.