

The Struggle is Real

Gentleness and Self-Control

Galatians 5:16-26

This series has taken an important look at the war going on inside every follower of Jesus between our flesh and the Holy Spirit inside of us. Today, we are preaching the final message on the final two fruits of the Spirit: Gentleness and Self Control.

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.” Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good.” Romans 12:21

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.” Galatians 5:16-26

Main Idea: The Struggle Is Real, but Gentleness and Self-Control Are Christlike Qualities.

Two Areas in which the Struggle Happens from Galatians 5:16-26:

I. The God Struggle

The Holy Spirit desires to produce fruit in each of us that affects every aspect of us.

Gentleness: A gentle attitude and behavior in all aspects of our lives, including our posture toward God. It is synonymous with meekness, which is not to be confused as weakness, but rather it is defined as *strength under control*.

“Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.” James 1:21

“This does not push itself to the front and does not easily get provoked...the true follower of Christ will be gentle and tender, even as He was.” Charles H. Spurgeon

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” Matthew 11:29

“It is a condition of mind and heart which demonstrates gentleness, not in weakness, but in power. It is a balance born in strength of character.” Spiros Zodhiates

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” James 1:2-4

II. The Human Struggle

Self-Control: to hold oneself in, to command oneself, to be a chief of oneself, to make one's heart obedient, to command one's own desires, to be the master of what one wants, or to say NO to one's body.

- **Struggle with Self:** Every single human being has a flesh that desires, and the flesh craves these things in excess. In addition, the world is good at selling you the idea that you should not deny yourself anything you desire. Above that, you have an enemy who will do everything he can to get you to embrace your fleshly desires.

“For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh.” Romans 7:18a

- **Struggle with Others:** This idea of self-control is not only about controlling our fleshly desires as they relate to personal excesses. It's also about controlling ourselves when we are tempted to take advantage of, be impatient with, cause harm to others. This desire is in all of us!

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 2:3-5

The ways we justify our flesh are limitless, but a common theme is *“I deserve this excess”*, or, *“they deserve to be treated this way because...”* After all, Sir Isaac Newton told us in physics that *for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction*. Yet, it is not true in our relationships to God, with ourselves, or with others. It is not the way of Jesus and should not be the way of his followers.

One thing should be clear after five weeks talking about this very real struggle: nobody gets it totally right. There is no one in church today who perfectly embodies the fruit of the Spirit and totally resists the deeds of the flesh. That is why we need Jesus...we cannot, do not, and will not ever measure up!

Bad News: Sin has separated us from God.

Worse News: We can't do anything to fix it.

Good News: Jesus provided the only fix by his life, death, & resurrection.

Best News: We enjoy forgiveness & reconciliation by faith and faith alone.

“What God the Father planned for you, and God the Son purchased for you on the cross, God the Spirit personalizes for you and applies to your life as you yield to him.” Warren Wiersbe

Invitation: If you have not yet received, by faith, the gift of salvation, it is available.

Sources & Further Reading Opportunities

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