



SESSION 2 — The Inner Conflict of a Godly Man—

Galatians 5:16-26

- Pastor Ben -

WINNING THE WAR WITHIN

Galatians 5:16-26

INTRODUCTION

There is an inward battle that continuously rages within the life of every believer. It is the conflict between good and evil, right and wrong, the flesh and the Spirit. This war is unremitting and fierce. The flesh and the Spirit are locked in active conflict with one another and neither will surrender. We will learn from this text is that walking in the Spirit guarantees _____ within and _____ without for every believer.

BACKGROUND TO GALATIANS

Galatians has been called both the “Magna Carta of Christian Liberty” and the “Christian Declaration of Independence.” Through salvation in Christ we have been set free from the bondage of sin and the law. But Paul quickly points out that _____ must always be defended from its two great enemies – _____ and _____.

In verses 16-25, we are shown the path to victory and peace, within and without, and that is by “walking in the Spirit” (5:16). The only way to be free from fleshly desire is to be sanctified by

God's Spirit. His influence alone can prevent liberty from degenerating into license. He helps us hold on to our liberty without becoming either legalistic or licentious.

THE _____ (v.17)

There is a civil war being fought over slavery (to sin) and freedom (in Christ) within the heart of every believer. This battle began at the moment of salvation when the Spirit of God took up residence within you. An immediate conflict arose because there was already a prior tenant dwelling within. It is your flesh, that part of man that is always in opposition to the things of God. The flesh desires to _____ you to _____, but the Spirit desires to _____ you to _____.

A. The _____ (v.17)

The flesh is mentioned _____ times in verses 16-25 (16, 17, 19, & 24). The flesh (*sarx*) is not referring to your skin and bones or hide and hair, but rather to that old sinful nature that still lives within. Ryken has said, "the flesh is the part of me that does not want what God wants, my corrupt human nature in all its weakness and depravity."



B. The _____ (v.17)

Thank God we are not without help and hope in this internal conflict. As a believer there is a greater power that resides within us, this power is the person of the Holy Spirit. He is mentioned _____ times in verses 16-25 (16, 17, 18, 22, & 25).

Ancient authors often created lists of vices and virtues, and here Paul gives a list contrasting the vices of the flesh (vv. 19-21) and the virtues of the Spirit (vv.22-23). He says the “works of the flesh are manifest” (Gal. 5:19). The word *manifest* means they are outward and obvious.

A. The _____ of the _____ (vv.19-21)

Puritan William Perkins said this list of vices is “a mirror to reveal the corruption of our own hearts.” Paul dogmatically states, “they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (5:21). The verb *do* is referring to habitual practice rather than an isolated lapse. Individuals who live a lifestyle defined by the works of the flesh do not have the Spirit of God residing within and will not experience the wonders of eternal life. This is what it looks like when the flesh is in control – dark, dirty, and hopeless!

B. The _____ of the _____ (vv.22-23)

With the black backdrop of the works of the flesh in place, the Apostle now displays the magnificent virtues of the Spirit’s fruit. Like a jeweler who places a single diamond on black velvet to display the beauty and facets of that precious gem. We have trudged through the mire of fleshly works, and now we get to enjoy the Garden (Orchard) of God with its bright sunshine, vivid colors, and lush fruit. The Spirit has but one goal – _____!

It is tempting for us to look at that list of nine virtues and so desire them that we purpose to create these through self-effort. Only God can produce this spiritual fruit. The Christian life is not a _____, _____ it _____ is _____ a _____. The secret to spiritual victory and spiritual vitality is the Holy Spirit of God. To win the war within, God has given us a scriptural command found in verse 16, “_____.”

Key: “Walking in the Spirit” is allowing the _____ of _____ to take the _____ of _____ to make me more like the _____ of _____.

We must live in the reality of Galatians 2:20 – “I am crucified with Christ...”. At salvation, our old nature was nailed to the cross and left for dead. We are reminded of this truth again in Galatians 5:24, “And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” The problem with our “old nature” (flesh) is that even though it has been crucified, we keep helping it get down off the cross and nursing it back to health. The flesh has been crucified with Christ – let it die! This is not speaking of a daily decision to _____ the cross, but a decision _____. Galatians 5:25, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” The word walk in this verse literally means to “keep in step with.”

Application: The Spirit is actively working in your life as a believer – keep up through _____ to His Word, _____ on His strength, _____ in Bible reading and prayer, and fellowship with believers.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit we can rejoice in a sure and sweet conquest over the flesh.

A. The _____ of _____ (v.16)

In verse 16 it says, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye _____ fulfill the lust of the flesh.” Here is a promise of victory. When we are “walking in the Spirit” (yielding control to Him by submission to His Word), we are assured that we will not yield to the strong, sinful desires of our fallen nature. The way to spiritual _____ victory _____ is _____ not _____ by _____ but through the _____ power.

B. The _____ of _____ (vv.22-23)

Living surrendered to the Spirit’s control through obedience to God’s word brings about the fruit of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. This nine-fold characteristic of the Spirit’s fruit will be our focus for the next few weeks.

CONCLUSION

As you examine your life do you find the fruit of the Spirit growing there? When the Spirit enters at salvation, He begins to produce that fruit within your life. It may be slow and gradual growth, but there will be growth. If there is not fruit it is because there is no root. You cannot bear the fruit of the Spirit if you are not a child of God.

Christian, if you would see a great harvest of spiritual fruit, if you would realize spiritual victory, if you desire to win the war within – you must walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Gal. 5:16).