

Being a Christian is More than a Statement
Galatians 5:16-26

Lack of love will always lead to the destruction of relationships.

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.
Galatians 5:14–15 ESV

The Galatians were destroying the gospel and the unity of the church by adding circumcision to faith in Christ.

This destruction of the gospel led to a judgmentalism based upon performance rather than unity based on grace.

Every church fight is the result of some or all people embracing that which appeals to the flesh, failing to humbly love and server others.

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Galatians 5:13 ESV

Real Christians are empowered to live by the Spirit.

Walking by the Spirit is only for those who are in Christ.

But I say, walk by the Spirit...

Galatians 5:16 ESV

And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Galatians 5:24 ESV

Walking by the Spirit removes us from the power of fleshly desires.

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

Galatians 5:16 ESV

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Romans 13:14 ESV

Real Christians make difficult choices.

The flesh desires what is opposed to the Spirit of Christ.

For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit...

Galatians 5:17 ESV

Desires: *to strongly desire to have what belongs to someone else and/or to engage in an activity which is morally wrong—'to covet, to lust, evil desires, lust, desire.'*

Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene Albert Nida. 1996. In *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., 1:290. New York: United Bible Societies.

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

Romans 8:7 ESV

The Spirit of Christ is always opposed to the desires of the flesh.

...and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh...

Galatians 5:17 ESV

...those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

Romans 8:5–6 ESV

There is no compromise or cooperation between the flesh and the Spirit since they are opposed to one another.

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.

Galatians 5:17 ESV

For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

Romans 7:15 ESV

For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

Romans 7:19 ESV

The Spirit will keep you from the sinful pleasures you want to do.

The flesh will keep you from choosing to please God as you want to do.

Though the battle for righteousness rages in the heart of the believer, Christ has set us free from condemnation by His Spirit.

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. **Galatians 5:18 ESV**

For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”

Romans 8:15 ESV

The faithful then are not under the law, that is to say, in Spirit: for the law cannot accuse them, nor pronounce sentence of death against them, although they feel sin, and confess themselves to be sinners: for the power and strength of the law is taken from it by Christ.

Luther, Martin. 1997. *Commentary on Galatians*. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

When the believer falls, the forgiveness of God becomes the soothing balm for the soul.

If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.

Psalms 130:3–4 ESV

A life willfully given to pleasing the flesh is the fruit of an unsaved soul.

Christians can and do sin, but a life of arrogant disobedience to God’s law is contrary to faith in Christ.

Galatians 5:19-21

“For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit...”

Luke 6:43–44 ESV

Choosing to live a flesh pleasing life is the evidence that the person is not going to heaven.

...I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:21 ESV

For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Romans 8:13 ESV

Yet I persistently sent to you all my servants the prophets, saying, ‘Oh, do not do this abomination that I hate!’ But they did not listen or incline their ear, to turn from their evil and make no offerings to other gods.

Jeremiah 44:4–5 ESV

The fruit of the Spirit is evidence that the person is a true Christian; it is not the cause of salvation.

The Spirit is powerful to produce the fruit as the Christian battles for obedience to God’s law.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:22–23 ESV

For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:2 ESV

Walk according to the Spirit. You will then be free from the dominion of the law, which will act only in the capacity of a kind adviser and will no longer lay a restraint upon your consciences.

John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries: Volume XXI*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003), 164

True Christians strive in the power of the Spirit which is the fruit of belonging to Christ.

And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Galatians 5:24 ESV

The death of the flesh is the life of the Spirit. If the Spirit of God lives in us, let Him govern our actions. There will always be many persons daring enough to make a false boast of living in the Spirit, but the apostle challenges them to a proof of the fact.

John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Volume XXI*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003), 169

The Holy Spirit will produce unity not division as the fruit of Christian actions.

Paul wants Christians to trust in Christ and the power of the Spirit.

If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. **Galatians 5:25 ESV**

v. 16 – walk by the Spirit

v. 17 – The desires of the Spirit

v. 18 – Led by the Spirit

v. 22 – The fruit of the Spirit

v. 25a – Live by the Spirit

v. 25b – Keep in step with the Spirit

When the Spirit empowers a Christian, peace and unity will naturally follow rather than biting and devouring one another.

Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Galatians 5:26 ESV

Believers will be humble rather than conceited.

Believers will be concerned for others rather than provoking or irritating them.

Believers will rejoice with others rather than envying them.

Mutual provocations and envyings are the daughters of ambition. He who aspires to the

highest rank must of necessity envy all others and disrespectful biting, stinging language is the unavoidable consequence.

John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Volume XXI*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003), 170