

Subject: *The Christian Walk – Part 2*
Scripture: *Galatians 5:16-26*

In this passage Paul gives us a very helpful overview of the Christian walk. It is one thing to talk the talk and it is another to walk the walk. What we believe should match up with how we live. Paul mentions four things here: the command, the conflict, the contrast, and the conquest. In our message last week we covered the first two:

1. THE COMMAND (vs. 16)

The command to walk in the Spirit is a command, not an option or a suggestion. It is a continuing, ongoing command. Paul says this is the way you are to live. The command to walk in the Spirit is for all believers. To walk in the Spirit means to rely on the Holy Spirit to guide you and enable you to live this way. It involves a promise that if you walk in the Spirit you will not fulfill the lust (desire) of the flesh.

2. THE CONFLICT (vs. 17)

There is a constant struggle between the Holy Spirit and the flesh. The Holy Spirit lives inside every believer, but the flesh live there too. The flesh is our unredeemed human nature that remains in us until we go to heaven. It is a lifelong battle. To walk in the Spirit is hard to do because we are constantly in this conflict with the flesh. It's hard, but it's not impossible.

3. THE CONTRAST (vs. 19-23)

Paul describes a life that is dominated by the flesh and a life dominated by the Spirit. There is a stark contrast between the two, so there it is clear if we are walking by the Spirit or fulfilling the desires of the flesh. First, Paul describes the works of the flesh in verses 19-21 and then he names the fruit of the Spirit in verses 22-23.

Notice a few things about all these works of the flesh. 1) They are all produced by the flesh. There is no mention of the devil or the world, but only the flesh. This is unredeemed human nature doing what it wants to do. 2) They are all “manifest” (evident, revealed). They are not hidden, but are easy to see. 3) There are many more. He mentions these works of the flesh, but this is not an all-inclusive, but only a representative list because in verse 21, he says “and such like.” Let's take a closer look at this ugly list of 17 works of the flesh:

1. adultery (Gk. *moicheia*)
2. fornication (NAS, immorality; Gk. *porneia*; illicit sexual activity)
3. uncleanness (NAS, impurity; Gk. *akatharsia*)
4. lasciviousness (Gk. *aselgeia*; sensuality; unrestrained sexual indulgence)
5. idolatry (false religion; religion that is based on self-effort and a wrong view of God)
6. witchcraft (NAS, sorcery; Gk. *pharmakeia*; used of mood & mind-altering drugs)
7. hatred (enmities, hateful attitudes Gk. *echthrai*)
8. variance (strifes, Gk. *ereis*)
9. emulations (jealousies, hateful resentment caused by coveting, Gk. *zeloi*)
10. wrath (outbursts of anger, unbridled temper Gk. *thumoi*)
11. strife (contentions, disputes, bitter conflicts, Gk. *eritheiai*)
12. seditions (divisions, Gk. *dichostasiai*)

13. heresies (dissensions, sects, Gk. *haireseis*)
14. envyings (Gk. *phthonoi*)
15. murders (Gk. *phonoï*)
16. drunkenness (Gk. *methai*)
17. revellings (carousing, orgies, Gk. *komoi*)

Some of these are sinful actions and some are sinful attitudes. Someone suggested that all sins can be put in one of three categories: sins of commission, sins of omission, and sins of disposition. All of these come from within a person, out of his unredeemed human nature. Jesus made it clear that man's basic problem is not what is outside of him but what is on the inside of him. **Mark 7:21-23** ²¹ *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,* ²² *Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:* ²³ *All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.*

Because this list of works of the flesh is suggestive and the warning is so severe, it has caused some believers to doubt their salvation. Who hasn't done some of these things? The key is a correct understanding of the word "do" in verse 21. This means a continual doing, to practice these things as a way of life. The Bible always judges a person's character on the basis of his common, habitual actions, not isolated or individual actions. This is what John clearly taught:

1 John 3:7-10 ⁷ *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth (practices) righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.* ⁸ *He that committeth (practices) sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.* ⁹ *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit (practice) sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.* ¹⁰ *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth (practices) not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.*

Paul then makes a sharp contrast with the fruit of the Spirit. The works of the flesh come from our fallen sin nature, but the fruit of the Spirit is produced by the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who are saved.

Fruit is an important subject in the Bible. Fruit is mentioned 106 times in the OT and 70 times in the NT.

The fruit of the Spirit is *expected* and it is *evident*. Bearing fruit is not just for some believers and optional for others. There is no such thing as a fruitless Christian. If there is spiritual life there will be spiritual fruit. Some bear more fruit than others, but all believers bear fruit.

Isaiah 5:1-7

Matthew 3:8 *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.*

Matthew 7:16-18

Matthew 13:23

John 15:4-5

The fruit of the Spirit is described as nine qualities that are produced by the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.

Years ago in many homes it was common to see an arrangement of artificial fruit in a bowl. It looked nice, but it was fake. We need to examine the fruit to make sure it's the real thing:

LOVE – It is the love of choice (not just an emotion or feeling). It involves sacrifice and service. This is a sure mark of salvation. *1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*

JOY – It is a deep sense of well-being regardless of circumstances. This kind of joy may be the greatest and deepest when things are the worst. Nothing can add to it or detract from it. *Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

PEACE – It comes from being right with God, and like joy, it is not based on circumstances. *John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

LONGSUFFERING (patience) – It is the ability to put up with other people. In *Colossians 3:12*, we are commanded to “put on a heart of longsuffering.”

GENTLENESS (kindness) – It is a tender concern for and a mildness in dealing with others.

GOODNESS – It is moral excellence that is shown through good works. It is the reason we have been born again and made new. *Ephesians 2:10 We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

FAITH (faithfulness) – It means being dependable, loyal, and trustworthy. Jesus is called “Faithful and True” in Revelation 19:11. He calls us to be faithful. I Cor. 4:2 says that stewards are required to be faithful. The greatest ability is dependability.

MEEKNESS – Meekness is not weakness, but it strength under control. It is humble submission. Jesus described Himself in *Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

TEMPERANCE (self-control) – This is control of our thoughts, desires, words, and actions. The last part of verse 23 says, “against such there is no law.” No law is needed to control or restrain people with this kind of character. This is the very character of Christ.

The Holy Spirit produces this kind of character in believers. We don't pick and choose which ones we like. It's not like going to the grocery store and picking the produce you want.

4. THE CONQUEST (vs. 24)

The flesh has actually been crucified in our spiritual union with Christ (Gal. 2:20), but it is still hanging on. The flesh still dwells in us, but it doesn't control us.

How can we apply this message: Be a fruit inspector. Is this kind of fruit evident in your life? Paul reminds us again in verse 25 of what he said in verse 16. If you live (are alive) in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Are you obeying the Lord by walking in the Spirit?