

Living the Spirit Filled Life Galatians 5:13-25

I. It involves charity (v.13-15)

A. Serve in love not the flesh. (v.13)

- "Christ does not give freedom to believers so they can do what they want but so they can, for the first time, do what God wants, because of love for Him."¹

a. Works of the Flesh are to Be Avoided

1. It cannot please God (Rom 8:8)
2. In it dwells no good thing (Rom. 7:18)
3. Do not put confidence in it (Phil. 3:3)
4. Do not make provision for the flesh by feeding it the things that it enjoys. (Rom 13:14)
 - "Every wrong action, every wrong word, every wrong idea, every wrong reaction, every wrong emotion, every wrong attitude is from the flesh...the reason we have anxiety, the flesh. The reason we have fear, the flesh. The reason we have terrible relationships, the flesh. The reason we have difficulty in marriage, the flesh. The reason we have difficulty in the family, the flesh. The reason we have difficulty cooperating with other people, the flesh. The reason we have pride, the flesh. All sin of every form, all wrong emotions, all wrong attitudes, all wrong actions, all wrong reactions, all wrong thoughts, all wrong words, and all wrong deeds all come out of the flesh."²

B. The whole of the Law can be summed up by love. (v.14)

- "The text does not suggest that human beings need to learn to love themselves before they can love others. Instead, it assumes that we love ourselves, in that we invariably seek our own interests. Love, then, seeks out the interests of others and pursues their best."³

C. Loving others does not come naturally [James 4:1-3] (v.15)

II. It involves choices (v.16-18)

A. Living by the Spirit is a volitional act. (v.16)

B. The flesh and spirit are in opposition to each other [Rom 7:18-19, 21-23] (v.17-18)

a. Victory over the flesh means abstaining from its desires [2 Pet. 1:4-10; 1 Pet. 2:11]

- "Do you want to put to death the lusts in your heart? Then stop [it]. Peter does not prescribe a program of therapy. He does not suggest that such sin be treated as an addiction. He simply says abstain. Quit doing it. You have no business indulging such thoughts. Put them away at once. You yourself must do this; it cannot be done for you."⁴
- "I do not know of a single scripture—and I speak advisedly—which tells me to take my sin, the particular thing that gets me down, to God in prayer and ask him to deliver me from it and then trust in faith that he will. Now that teaching is also

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often put like this: you must say to a man who is constantly defeated by a particular sin, "I think your only hope is to take it to Christ and Christ will take it from you." But what does Scripture say in Ephesians 4:28 to the man who finds himself constantly guilty of stealing, to a man who sees something he likes and takes it? What am I to tell such a man? Am I to say, "Take that sin to Christ and ask him to deliver you?" No, what the apostle Paul tells him is this: "Let him that stole, steal no more." Just that. Stop it. And if it is fornication or adultery or lustful thoughts, again: Stop it, says Paul. He does not say, "Go and pray to Christ to deliver you." No. You stop doing that..."⁵

III. It involves comprehension (v.19-24)

A. Recognize the deeds of the flesh (v.19-21a)

a. Four Categories for Deeds of the Flesh

1. Immorality- any sexual engagement outside of marriage.

- "It refers to any and all sexual activity outside the bounds of marriage, including homosexuality, premarital sex, and marital unfaithfulness... Impurity can refer to sexual sin, but it generally includes more than immorality. Sensuality, too, is broader than immorality and would include any sexual activity not necessarily involving fornication."⁶

2. Idolatry- Worshipping anything other than God. It was and is often accompanied by drug use.

- "Many ancient religious ceremonies involved occultic practices in which drugs were used to induce supposed communication with deities, and pharmakeia thereby came to be closely related to witchcraft and magic. Aristotle and other ancient Greek writers used the word as a synonym for witchcraft and black magic, because drugs were so commonly used in their practice."⁷

3. Injuring- Actions that cause conflict in relationships.

- ~ Enmities, Strife, Jealousy, Outbursts of anger, Disputes, Dissensions, Factions, Envy

4. Indulgence- Drunkenness and carousing

- "A more fitting word in today's vocabulary would be partying—having a celebration where liquor and drugs are freely used and abused, immoral activity is freely enjoyed, and fun and pleasure are indulged in at the expense of God's glory and holiness...It is clear from this passage that these actions are not produced by demons, Satan, or the world but are the specific outworking's of a mindset and lifestyle that are controlled by the flesh and produced by the volition of the individual."⁸

b. People who habitually do this give no indication of being a Christian. [1 Cor. 6:9-11] (v.21b)

B. Recognize the deeds of the Spirit (v.22-24)

a. The Spirit produces godly attitudes and actions in the Christian's life. (v.22-23)

- ~ Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness and goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Controlled

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- b. Christians can live by the Spirit because our old man was crucified with Christ (v.24)
 - “The best understanding is to see ‘have crucified’ as an allusion to the cross of Jesus Christ, which, as a past event, fits the aorist tense used here by Paul. It looks back to the cross, the time at which the death of the flesh was actually accomplished. Yet, because we are still alive on the earth and still possess our humanness, we have not yet entered into the future fullness of that past event...Because the flesh is defeated forever, and we now live in the realm where Christ reigns over us by His Spirit, we should live according to the Spirit and not the flesh.”⁹

IV. It involves commitment (v.25)

A. The Spirit filled life is a command (v.25)

- “The simplest answer is a single test...If Christlikeness is developing (it will never be perfectly or fully developed in this life), if your life is given to soul-winning service, and if praise, worship, thanksgiving, and submissiveness are in your heart and actions, then the Spirit is in control. You need not look for some startling manifestation...some ecstatic experience. Yield control to God; keep it there, and use all the power available to develop the biblical characteristics of the Spirit-filled life.”¹⁰

Points to Ponder:

1. Sanctification is a process. You must actively engage in it to experience the Spirit’s filling.
2. Avoid temptation or situations that cause you to lose your testimony or walk.
3. As a Christian, you are never too far away from God not to come back. All it takes is one step at a time.

¹ John F. MacArthur, *Galatians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 146.

² John F. MacArthur, “Walking by the Spirit,” Online. Accessed November 23, 2018.

<http://www.gty.org/Resources/Sermons/90-34>

³ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 335.

⁴ John MacArthur, *The Vanishing Conscience*, Electronic ed. (Dallas: Word Pub., 1994), 157.

⁵ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Sanctified Through the Truth: The Assurance of Our Salvation* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1989), 54.

⁶ Robert Dean Jr. and Thomas Ice, *What the Bible Teaches about Spiritual Warfare* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2000), 90.

⁷ MacArthur, *Commentary*, 162.

⁸ Dean and Ice, *What the Bible Teaches*, 93.

⁹ MacArthur, *Commentary*, 171.

¹⁰ Charles C. Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1994), 128.

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