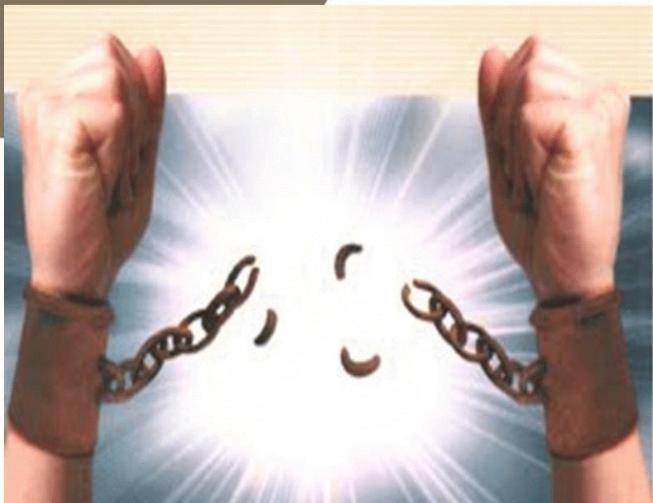


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ALIVE IN CHRIST

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

The Letter to the
GALATIANS

WEEK 10

Day 1

Study: Galatians 5:13-18

Reading: I John 5:1-21

Memory: Proverbs 3:13

Have you ever tried to do a job where you don't know exactly what the person wants done or you don't know exactly how to do it? When I first tried out for the soccer team in college, I was completely unfamiliar with what the coach wanted. I played defense for my high school and we always played a zone defense. The college team played a type of man-to-man defense, but I didn't understand exactly how it was supposed to work. Instead of calling it "man-to-man" defense, the coach told us that we needed to "mark up." I didn't know exactly what was expected of me, so it became extremely frustrating. It wasn't the coaches fault, but it was my fault because I tried to figure it out on my own without talking to the coach for clarification.

Today, we are going to see how God gives us a list of things that we should and shouldn't do. He tells us what to do and what not to do so that we will live a life of joy and peace.

What Does the Bible Say?

Paul reminded the Galatians once again that they were called to freedom in Christ. One of the tendencies of Christians, once they have grasped the truth about their freedom in Christ, is to take it to the extreme and use it as an opportunity to please the flesh. Paul knew this and warned them to serve one another in love (vs 13). He wanted them to realize that love was the key to true Christian living. He repeated part of Christ's words by telling the Galatians that if they loved their neighbors as they loved themselves, they would be doing what was right. They would also avoid several problems and fights if they followed the advice that was given by God (vs 14-15).

As the Galatians were reading this letter, they must have started to wonder what they were going to use as a guide to help them know what was right and wrong since they no longer had to obey the law. Paul told them that the key to Christian living is to be led by the Holy Spirit. If the

Holy Spirit was in control of their lives, the Christians would be living how God wanted them to live (vs 16). Paul put the Spirit and the flesh on opposite ends of the spectrum. The flesh refers to many of the natural desires of our fallen nature. Paul told the Galatians this to remind them that their Christian freedom doesn't give them liberty to sin and fulfill the desires of the flesh (vs 17-18).

Paul then gave the Galatians a list of things that were fleshly and were sins before God. Paul clearly gave this list to help guide the believers into righteousness. He in no way was telling them that God would not accept them if they committed these sins. He had reminded the believers in the previous verses that the Holy Spirit would help guide them into doing what was right. That was, and still is, one of the most wonderful parts of the Christian life. In the Old Testament, they had to try to keep the law on their own. In New Testament Christianity, we have the Holy Spirit's help as we attempt to love God and love others.

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you love God and love others like you should? No one is perfect in these areas, and God doesn't expect you to be. The Christian life is a whole growth experience and you can continually grow through the power and leading of the Holy Spirit. Just because the Christian life isn't a list of do's and don'ts that you have to follow, doesn't mean that God doesn't have things that He does and doesn't want you to do. The key is your reason behind obeying God. God wants you to obey Him because you love Him, not because you have to. When you obey out of love, you will find that you will like the fact that God tells you what He wants and doesn't want you to do. 1 John 5:33 says, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." The more you grow in Christ and the closer you are to Him, the more you will realize that He has a purpose for each thing that He tells you to do and not to do.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for giving you principles to guide your life.*
- * *Ask God to help you love Him and love others more each day.*
- * *Praise God because He is a God of wisdom and order.*

Day 2

Study: Galatians 5:19-21

Reading: Ephesians 5:1-20

Memory: Proverbs 3:13

Over the years that I coached soccer, I found that one of the great challenges was getting players to do things the right way. In practice, it was easy to be lazy and not take the time and effort to do things right. Some of the players had the idea in their heads that doing it the right way wasn't a big deal. The problem with that type of thinking is that the team had a hard time improving. Many of the players didn't realize that if they would have worked hard at doing things the right way when the season first began, they wouldn't have had such a hard time doing it the right way at the end of the season.

Today, we are going to see that it is easy to think that some sins are no big deal. We need to realize the terrible effects that sin has on us so we don't get in over our heads and scar our lives.

What Does the Bible Say?

Paul had warned the Galatians not to let their Christian freedom cause them to stumble into sin and fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Paul then gave them a list of some of the sins that are "in the flesh." When Jesus was on the earth, He told all men that sin wasn't just committed with the body, but it was committed in the heart. That is why Paul said that the "deeds of the flesh" were evident. When a person is living in the flesh, it will show up in their actions.

The first three sins that are listed are sexual sins. God has designed sex to be a wonderful thing, but He has designed it only for the marriage relationship. Any thought or action outside of the marriage relationship, whether before marriage or during marriage, is wrong. Jesus said that it was a sin to think sexual thoughts about a person other than your spouse (Matthew 5:28).

The next two sins had to do with idolatry and putting other things before God. When a person worships something besides God, it is wrong. Paul also listed "witchcraft" as one of these sins. According to

the Bible Knowledge Commentary, “*Witchcraft* is the translation of the Greek word *pharmakeia* from which the term “pharmacy” comes. In ancient times the worship of evil powers was accompanied by the use of drugs to create trances. This vice will also be prominent in the Tribulation period.”

He then listed eight sins that had to do with our dealings with other people. These are hating, making trouble, being jealous, being angry, being selfish, making people angry with each other, causing divisions among people and feeling envy. In our minds, we would not normally put these in the same list as the sexual sins, but sin is sin before God.

Paul also told them that getting drunk and going around to ungodly parties was wrong as well. Paul reminded them that God hates these sins so much that He will send people to hell for committing them. The point he is trying to make is that sin, no matter how small we think it is, is a big deal in God’s eyes.

How Does this Apply to Me?

Read through the following list of sins and ask the Holy Spirit to show you if any of these sins are evident in your life: being sexually unfaithful, not being pure, taking part in sexual sins, worshiping gods, practicing witchcraft, hating, making trouble, being jealous, being angry, being selfish, making people angry with each other, causing divisions among people, feeling envy, being drunk or having wild and wasteful parties. These are all things that God declares are wrong.

If the Holy Spirit tugged at your heart while you examined your life, you need to get it right with God today. Sin does not affect your standing before God as His child because you have been declared righteous in His sight, but sin does interfere with your relationship with God. He has already forgiven you and the relationship has been made right on His end, but you need to make it right from your end so that you can restore fellowship with God.

Suggestions for Prayer

* *Thank God for showing you what is right and wrong.*

Thought for the day

Day 3

Study: Galatians 5:22-26

Reading: John 15:1-16, I Corinthians 13:4-7

Memory: Proverbs 3:13

What Does the Bible Say?

The key to a successful Christian life isn’t doing or not doing. It is about your understanding of grace and choosing to live out that grace. God wants us to be led by the Holy Spirit every moment of our lives. Yesterday, we saw how Paul listed outward signs that come from being led by the flesh. He then went on to list outward signs that come from being led by the Holy Spirit. He called this list the “fruit of the Spirit.” The explanation for this is very simple. If a tree produces beautiful fruit, you know that the tree has a good root system. If it produces rotten fruit, you know that the root system is not what it should be.

The first three signs of having a Spirit controlled life that Paul listed have to do mainly with the inner feelings when we yield to the Spirit. The list began with love. Paul knew from the Old Testament as well as from Jesus that love was the most important fruit for a Christian to have. When the Spirit is abounding in the heart of the believer, he will display love to God and men. The next one Paul listed was joy. 1 Peter 1:8 says, “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:” One of the greatest privileges of being a believer is that we don’t have to live continually down or depressed because of the great joy that comes from God. The Spirit also brings great peace into our lives. We don’t have to live in confusion or on an emotional roller coaster because God promised us that He would give us peace.

The next six evidences that Paul listed had to do with daily interaction with others. When we are led by the Holy Spirit we will be patient. We won’t get easily bothered by the actions of others because God will help us love them like He loves them. Because we have His love dwelling inside of us, we will be able to show others kindness and goodness. Jesus Christ himself displayed these characteristics in His life and the Holy Spirit will display these through our lives.

Being led by the Holy Spirit means that we will be faithful. He will

give us the strength and encouragement that we need to go on living for Jesus Christ. He will also help us to gently lead others to Christ and help us train them up to love God. Lastly, the Holy Spirit will give us the self-control that we need to avoid sin and live a life that glorifies God. Paul stated that Christians who are led by the Holy Spirit don't need a law to follow. If they are following the Spirit, the fruits will be evident in their lives. Those who have accepted Jesus don't have to follow the flesh. They can, and should, follow the leading of the Holy Spirit (vs 22-24).

Paul told the Galatians that if they were saved, they should be led by the Holy Spirit in their daily lives. God not only wanted to bring salvation, but He wants to lead His children to bring glory to Himself (vs 25). Paul wanted the Galatians to realize that they shouldn't waste their time telling others how they should keep the law. He wanted them to encourage each other to be led by the Holy Spirit (vs 26).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Write down how the following fruits of the Spirit are displayed in your life. The best way to fix areas that are not right in your life is to ask God every day to help you in those areas.

Love:

Joy:

Peace:

Patience:

Kindness:

Goodness:

Faithfulness:

Gentleness:

Self-control:

Thought for the day

Day 4

Study: Galatians 5:13-17

Reading: Romans 13:8-14

Memory: Proverbs 3:13

What were we called to (vs 13)?

What are we not supposed to use our freedom for (vs 13)?

What do you think is meant by this?

****One of the reasons that people place such an emphasis on keeping the law is that they are afraid other believers will think that they don't have to live a righteous life.*

What should guide our actions (vs 13b-14)?

How does love often remove the need for multiple rules and regulations?

What was the opposite of loving others (vs 15)?

What will be the result of living without love (vs 15b)?

With such an emphasis on love, not only here, but in many other portions of Scripture, why do you think Christianity is often looked down on?

What do you think it means to "walk in the Spirit" (vs 16)?

If you are walking in the Spirit, what will you not do (vs 16b)?

How does walking in the Spirit remove the need for a list of rules and regulations?

What two forces do you have warring inside of you (vs 17)?

How do you know which one is winning?

****We will see that the fruit that comes from our lives reveals what is controlling our lives.*

Romans 13:8-14

What are we supposed to owe (vs 8)?

What does the person who loves others do (vs 8b)?

How are the commandments summed up (vs 9)?

What does love not do (vs 10)?

What else did Paul challenge the Romans to do (vs 11)?

What did he mean by this?

****The fact that we don't have to follow the law does not mean that we can live however we want. Here, Paul is challenging his readers not to become complacent in their spiritual lives, but to live in obedience to God with new vigor.*

What are we challenged to do (vs 12)?

How are we not supposed to walk (vs 13)?

What does it mean to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (vs 14)?

****Think of the idea of putting on clothes or putting on armor. It is the idea of seeking to become like Christ.*

What are we not to make provision for (vs 14)?

Personal Application

What can I learn about God from this passage?

How can I apply what I have learned to my every day life?

Day 5

Study: Galatians 5:18-21

Reading: Colossians 3:1-11

Memory: Proverbs 3:13

What do we not need if we are being led by the Spirit (vs 18)?

How do we know the right things to do?

****Being led by the Spirit does not mean we can do whatever we feel like doing. The law is different than the New Testament commands and principles. Many people say they are being “led by the Spirit” when in actuality, they are being led by their emotions. The Spirit works together with the Word of God to direct us and lead us into how God wants us to live. Though the Bible is not just a list of rules and regulations, we are given lists of rules and regulations to follow so we can know what it is to be led by the Spirit. The Spirit gives us what we need to follow God's instructions and convicts us when we are not following them.*

Why was the list of the works of the flesh given (vs 19-21)?

****If you are being led by the Spirit, the things listed in these verses will not be part of your life. The purpose of this list is not to say, “Stop doing these things” but to reveal if you are being led by the Spirit. You are not challenged to try harder to not do these things, but told to yield to the Spirit who will give you the power not to do them. You must say no to those things and the Holy Spirit will give you all the power you need to do so.*

What will those who do the sins listed in verses 19-21 not inherit?

Does this mean that if a person is jealous, they will lose their salvation or they are not saved?

****The sins listed in these verses reveal that a person is not being controlled by the Spirit. Believers can commit these sins, and the point*

being made by Paul was that these things are wrong. He uses this same type of argument in other places in the New Testament to help his readers understand the seriousness of sin. The things mentioned are sin and wrong before God. It is those sins that will keep an unbeliever out of heaven.

Colossians 3:1-11

What should believers seek after (vs 1)?

What does verse 2 mean?

Why should we do what verses 1 & 2 say (vs 3-4)?

What should we put to death (vs 5)?

What do you think this means?

What do the sins listed in verse 5 have in common?

How does God view these sins (vs 6)?

What does verse 7 declare about those who don't believe?

What must we choose to do (vs 8)?

What do you think it means to put off the old self and put on the new self (vs 9-10)?

What did Paul emphasize about the new self (vs 11)?

What is your part and what is God's part in the sanctification process?

Personal Application

What can I learn about God from this passage?

How can I apply what I have learned to my every day life?

Day 6

Study: Galatians 5:22-26

Reading: John 16:5-15

Memory: Proverbs 3:13

Why do you think verse 22 says "fruit of the Spirit" and not "fruits of the Spirit"?

****This passage is not saying you need to be more loving and then work on being more joyous, then strive to have more peace. It is revealing that when you yield to the Spirit these will be the results. When you let the Spirit control you all of these will increase in your life. These are given to help you evaluate your level of Spirit control.*

How can you allow the Spirit to control you in these areas (vs 22-23)?

****It must be noted that the Holy Spirit isn't meant to be some mysterious person. God has given us His Word and the Holy Spirit works in conjunction with each other to conform us into the image of Christ. If you attempt to follow the Word of God without the Holy Spirit you will end up with a self-centered legalistic approach to Christianity. If you attempt to be led by the Spirit without making the effort to know what God says in His Word, you will end up living a life that is self-centered and mistake your emotions for the Spirit.*

What have those who belong to Christ done (vs 24)?

What do you think this means

Can a person be living in the Spirit without obeying the Spirit (vs 25)? Explain.

What should we not become (vs 26)? What will this lead to (vs 26)?

How is this contrary to the Spirit?

John 16:5-15

Where did Jesus say he was going (vs 5)?

****The teaching here took place at the last supper that Jesus had with his disciples.*

Why was it important that Jesus went away (vs 7)?

What did Jesus say the Holy Spirit would do (vs 8)?

Why do people need to be convicted of sin (vs 9)?

Why do people need to be convicted of righteousness (vs 10)?

****They would not have the example of Jesus to follow. They would need the Spirit to help them know what was right.*

Why do people need to be convicted of judgment (vs 11)?

Why did Jesus not say everything He wanted to (vs 12)?

What was the Holy Spirit going to do (vs 13)?

How does He do this?

How can you know if something is of the Spirit or if it is from your emotions or flesh (vs 14-15)?

****The Father, Son and Spirit all work together and are in complete agreement. They will not contradict each other. The Holy Spirit confirms the truth that has been given to us through the Word of God. He also helps illuminate the Word of God to us so we can understand it in a deeper way.*

Personal Application

What can I learn about God from this passage?

How can I apply what I have learned to my every day life?

Bible Memory

Proverbs 3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, 2 for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. 3 Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. 4 So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man. 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. 7 Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. 8 It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones. 9 Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; 10 then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine. 11 My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline or be weary of his reproof, 12 for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights. 13 Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding,