Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Walking by the Spirit, Part 1
Scripture: Galatians 5:16-18
Code: 1668

Galatians 5, beginning in verse 16. And I'd like to read just as the setting verses 16-18. "This I say then walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. And these are contrary the one to the other so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law." Now anyone who knows anything about the basics of the Christian life knows that the key to living the Christian life is the Holy Spirit.

At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in the life of a believer and becomes the resource and the energy and the power for that believers life. That is basically the theme of these verses. The Spirit controlled life and what it produces. When we get to the production end of it, we get to verse 22 and it tells us about the fruit of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control."

The basis of the Christian life when it's lived successfully and to the glory of God and fruitfully is the energy and the power of the Holy Spirit. Now remember that in the book of Galatians, there is a contrast going on all the time between law and grace. And the contrast in the last two Chapters of Galatians is between law as a principle of Christian living and grace as a principle of Christian living. And Paul's argument is that you do not need to circumscribe yourself as a Christian to a law. To an external code. Because the Holy Spirit internally produces what the law externally never could produce.

And so the contrast then is between the legalism and living a Spirit filled life or walking by the Holy Spirit. The believer does not need to live legalistically under a code of written law, under a system of ceremonial routine and ritual, he can simply walk by the Holy Spirit indwelling him and fulfill what God always intended for man in terms of holiness. And so the whole idea of holiness goes inside and a resident Spirit accomplishes what the external law never could accomplish.

Now before Christ, we have learned in Galatians that there was bondage to the external law and since men couldn't keep it there was a condemnation that was written right into it. Christ came along and He paid the penalty that the law required. God's law is a holy law. God said if you don't keep my law you're dead, I'll kill you, take your life. The soul that's in it that shall die. The wages of sin is death. And so the law had a penalty and the penalty was execution or death spiritually. Christ came along and paid the penalty. Thus, He liberated all men who come to Him in faith. He liberated them

from having to keep a code of laws. Either for their salvation or in response to their salvation because He provided also after His death the gift of the Spirit who would be resident inside the believer and become the restrainer of sin. Something the external law used to do.

Now in the book of Galatians, we know that there are several churches being addressed because Paul had founded no less four in Galatia. And we know that the Judaisers or the circumcision party or the super-legalistic non-Christians, they attached to the church, but were not really born again, had arrived in Galatia and they started to preach to those Christians there and to those people coming to church not yet Christians and they messed them up. Because what they told them was, number one, Paul is not a true apostle. Paul has no credentials. You can't believe the man and so in Chapters 1 and 2, Paul answers that very clearly and establishes his apostleship and his authority.

The second thing they said was, you can't be saved by grace alone. You must be circumcised and you must maintain mosaic law, Chapters 3 and 4, Paul answers that. The third thing that they unloaded on the Galatians was that once you're saved, you then must obey the law. You must continue to obey the law and this is the way to live your life circumscribing yourself to the written law and Paul answers that in Chapters 5 and 6. And what he says in effect is that you do not need an external law. You do not need to follow the ceremonies and all the observances and all of the routine and the rigmarole and the ritual. And even the written moral law is unnecessary, because the Spirit of God comes inside of you and effects the holiness that the law externally was meant to force you into in the old covenant.

And do you remember last time we saw that what the old covenant was designed to do was to scare people into obedience. In other words, you better do this or you'll die. But under the new covenant, the Spirit of God produces that in us without fear. That's really the message of Galatians 5 and 6. Don't try to circumscribe yourself to law. Look at verse 1 of Chapter 5. It simply says this, "For freedom Christ has set us free. Therefore standfast and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." You've been liberated. There's no sense in imposing a legalistic situation on Christians. The Holy Spirit will produce that. And I told you something very significant two weeks ago.

I told you something that I repeat because I think it's so important. The more legalism you apply to your Christian life, the more you choke the Holy Spirit. Because what you're doing is you're eliminating the necessity of His ministry. Plus you're creating a sort of a spiritual hypocrisy. Jesus said if the Son shall set you free you shall be free for real. Leave it at that. And allow the Spirit of God to produce the works of holiness as you simply walk by the Spirit. There are some people who equate holiness with how many times you go to church, how many times a day you pray, did you read your Bible?

I had a guy like that in college. And they had an optional prayer meeting, you didn't have to go to. It was the only optional thing they had, and so I took advantage of it. I didn't go. That's simple enough.

It was the only chance I had to exercise my own prerogative as a Christian and I had none. Those were carnal days as I told you a couple of weeks ago. But I didn't go to this and the guy trapped me in the hall one day and he said you're not spiritual. And I said, I know that, but how do you know? He said because you don't go to the optional prayer meeting. Now you see what his view of spirituality was? It's where you went, not what you were.

And I'll never forget I had an opportunity, somebody got sick in desperation they asked me to teach a class on a Sunday morning. They had a Sunday School class, I guess about four or five people got sick, because I wasn't even on the list an alternate. But a lot of people got sick and in fact, as I remember there was an epidemic going on. And somebody said, we don't know of anyone else and we know you're a preacher's son and so forth and so forth. So would you teach the class. And so I'll never forget I taught this class and another fellow came to me afterwards and so oh my, he said. That was a marvelous lesson. I didn't know you were spiritual. Oh.

Now you see spirituality was predicated on whether I did or didn't go to prayer meeting or whether I did or didn't teach a class. Well, you see for some people that's the mentality of spirituality. Spirituality is where you go and what you do and all of these little things, not what's going on inside. That's legalism. That's attempting to equate holiness with performance, you see. And that's what Paul is really arguing against. He is saying that freedom in Christ is the freedom, not just to run amuck, but it's the freedom to allow the Spirit of God to produce holiness without you grunting and groaning to try to effect your own by self effort.

But you know, Paul came along and he was preaching all of this freedom and man the Jewish people had an awful time swallowing this. You see the reason they had a hard time swallowing it was because they only knew of one way to hold back sin and that was the law, right? In the Old Testament that was the only restrainer there was. Where you keep the law, you get it. So everybody kept the laws as close as they could or else they knew they were going to be in real trouble. Lose your life. Commit adultery, you just didn't get a lot of hmmm, no, stoned. It was a whole different thing. So they were in fear. So Paul comes along and says we're not under law as Christians and the Jews, the legalistic Jews, say wait a minute if you pull the law out, you're going to have sin going crazy, because the only restrainer for sin that they could conceive of was the law.

But we know from 2 Thessalonians Chapter 2 that the Holy Spirit is called the restrainer, isn't He? He restrains sin from the inside. But it was hard for them to understand it. So they saw the message of freedom from law as the bursting of the dam wall and the waters of sin would drown everybody. So Paul has to stop in these two chapters and very carefully show that Christian liberty, Christian freedom, walking in the Spirit does not mean sin runs crazy, sin runs wild. Just the opposite. In fact, if you want to compare the saints of the New Testament with the saints of the Old Testament, you're going to have an interesting time because you're going to find there are infinitely more dirty blotches on the saints of the Old than there in the New, right?

I mean, we look back and we scratch our heads and we see David, blessed man of God and then we read what he did. Or Abraham and so many of them like that. Yes, because they didn't have the strength of restraint. The law could not effect that restraint because they were so fleshly, so bent towards sin, but the Spirit of God can in a more powerful way. So Paul wants to show that Christian liberty does not mean sin goes wild. Now remember last time, we said that Paul shows in verse 13-15 that freedom does not mean freedom to indulge the flesh. No.

Verse 13, "For brethren you have been called unto liberty only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh." So Paul is saying that freedom is not freedom to indulge the flesh and that's what people would say, you know. Well, if you're just going to live like you want, just walk in the Spirit and not have law, you're going to run crazy and you're going to get into sin. No, no. Our freedom is not to indulge the flesh.

Secondly, it is not freedom to injure others. The end of verse 13, "but by love," do what, "serve one another." It's the freedom to love one another. Thirdly, it is not freedom to ignore the law, verse 14. "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even this thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." So Christian liberty is not to indulge the flesh, injure others, and ignore the law. But rather, you can fulfill the law verse 14 says, by the power of the Spirit. How can the Christian free from law? The only restraint that the Jew ever knew to keep from messing up his whole life. Verse 16 gives the answer. "This I say walk," watch this, "by the Spirit." Put that in your Bible if it says in. Cross it out and write by in it. "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

Now listen to me, Paul says this, your Christian liberty is not to indulge the flesh. It is not to injure others. It is not ignore the law. You say well, that's fine well and good Paul. You tell me that, but how do I keep from doing those things? Walk by the Spirit. Not walking in the Spirit as if you're in some big box, but it's walking by His power, by His energy. This is the springboard for all of Paul's discussion then from verse 16-25. And here we have a complete presentation of the doctrine of walking in the Spirit or the concept of walking by the Spirit.

Now this is basic to the Christian life and it's the theme. If you notice verse 18 and he repeats it again, "If you be led by the Spirit, you're not under the law." Verse 25 says "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." And so three times in this passage he talks about walking by the Spirit. That's the theme. The Spirit walk. Walking by the Spirit. This is basic to holiness. Now mark it friends. I want you to get the introduction so you can smoothly slide into the passage. He is trying to point out that sin doesn't run wild without law, because the Spirit is there and we can have holiness in our lives without legalism. The holiness comes as we walk by the energy of the Holy Spirit.

As we yield to Him. It's essentially the very same concept that you have in Ephesians 3:16 where he prays that you be strengthened with His might by the Spirit in the inner man. Or in Ephesians 5:18

where he says, "be being kept," what, "filled with the Spirit." It's the same idea. That in order to live a holy life, the Christian does not set up a bunch of dos and don'ts a bunch of little nitty gritty rules and all the time he's doing all these things externally, inside he's wishing and he's lusting and he's doing all these things mentally, you know. He's a classic Pharisee that whom Jesus said that's fine Pharisees. You don't do this and you don't do that, but your thoughts are polluting. Yeah, you talk about murder and you hate and if you hate in your heart you're as well as murdered. Or you talk about lust you say you don't commit adultery, you lust after a woman in your heart, you've committed adultery, right?

I've seen situations where Christians did not do things, but their thoughts were so corrupt that God must have treated their not doing them as he would have treated their doing them. Because of the patterns of thought. Because they knew nothing of the Holy Spirit and walking by the Spirit. Only of being circumscribed to an external ethic. And so the walk in the Spirit then simply allows or by the...keep saying walk in Spirit, really should be by the Spirit, but the walk by the energy of the Spirit then is what fulfills in us the holiness of God.

Now I'll tell you something, it's obvious that this is going to work if we're faithful. I mean, if I had my choice of being obedient to an outside list of rules or simply walking by the energy of an inside power isn't even a choice is it. Man, I'm glad I live in the new covenant. I'd have a bad time in the old covenant. The Lord knows I may not have lived long from all of the sins of the past in my life knowing what I knew, how responsible would I have been under the old covenant. But I've learned in the new covenant what holiness is and holiness for me is not a list of outside rules. Holiness for me is simply walking by the energy of the indwelling Spirit who empowers me to do the things that I couldn't force myself to do no matter what the outside rules were.

And that was the hang up in the Old Testament. That's why David poured out his heart in the Psalms and says God, I can't stand this. There it is, but I can't seem to maintain it. And yet the Spirit of God maintains it in me as I walk by His power in the new covenant. Well, the walk by the Spirit then comes in four parts in our text and I'm just going to show you just a beginning look. But four parts, the command, the conflict, the contrast, and the conquest, the command, the conflict, the contrast, and the conquest.

First of all, let's look at the command and we already read it. Let's look at it again. Verse 16, "This I say then," now if the then bounces you backwards, if our liberty is not liberty to sin, how do we prevent it, "walk by," and it's really in the present tense, continue to walk or keep on "walking by the Spirit." This is a daily routine. This isn't something you come to in one point in your life and say from now on I commit myself. I'm going to accept the Spirit walk. No, no, no. It's not a once for a deal. You just do it every day. It's walking. It's walking continuously. Keep on walking by the Spirit. "And you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

Boy that's a beautiful concept. You know what this says to me? This says that a Christian if he's only a minute old in Christ has the wherewithal to completely fulfill the requirements of God for holiness. You say, but he doesn't know anything. He only needs to know one thing. What? Keep on walking by the Spirit and the Spirit will produce in him the things that God desires. You know, it's very easy for us to say well, I know he's a young Christian and that's why he got goofed up. Well, wait a minute. He's got the same resource. It's simply in the Christian life boiled down to this. Walk by the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

Sin is usually not a question of information. It's a question of whether you're walking in the Spirit or not, walking in His power and His energy by His strength. Now the fulfillment then of God's holiness comes by walking by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit, when He comes in, controls the life and begins to exercise our liberty in a way that never violates ourselves. It never violates others. It never violates God and that's the three things our liberty, Paul says, will not do if we continue to walk by the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit becomes our restrainer. Now in this passage, the Spirit is mentioned seven times. And so we certainly are aware of what the apostle is saying. He is seven times over emphasizing that the Spirit subdues the flesh. That the Spirit is the power over the flesh. That the way to walk as a believer is to walk by His energy. We will check our lusts. We will insight love. We will fulfill the law, not by circumscribing ourselves to an outside code, but by walking by the Spirit.

And I can say and so can you that you've seen in your life many, many Christians, bless their hearts, who got under some kind of legalistic teaching and wound up trying to live by a code that somebody else set for them and never did know the meaning of victory in their whole lives. Now what does the word walk imply? Well, you can go into a lot on that, but you're familiar with it. Let me just say this. It implies progress. It's a present tense, keep on walking idea. It's a day by day, step by step progress. It's a continue on with the Spirit as the life of the Christian unfolds on step at a time he yields that one step to the control of the Holy Spirit. That's the key to holiness.

It's governed by the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. I'm sure you're well aware that we believe with all our hearts that every Christian possesses the Holy Spirit. If I didn't believe that people, I'd be the most frustrating human being in the world trying to communicate to people that I live the Christian life when I wasn't sure they had the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:9 tells us clearly that every believer has the Spirit. So you say well, all we have to do then is submit to the Spirit and just allow Him to control our lives. Boy that really sounds easy. Well, it is. I mean, it sounds easy. It's not a complicated doctrine. There's nothing I can really say about it. But let me just say this, don't make it sound too easy.

I remember a chorus that we used to sing long time ago when I was a little guy. I almost said younger, young. But when I was a little kid I used to sing this song, Let Go and Let God. Now I thought that was nice song and I used to sing that little song, Let Go and Let God, have his wonderful

way or something like that. You know, I began to think about that the other day. Let go, now wait a minute. Let go, I don't like that. The implication of the song is that you just sort of flop on the Holy Spirit and you say well there I am do it.

That's what we call the theology of quietism. If you want a term for it, quietist. Those are...incidentally, probably the quietists that you would be most familiar with would be the Quakers who are quietists. For years and years there were great Bible conferences called Kezicconferences. Kezicconferences were for the most part quietistic. Some of you, I'm sure, have read Hannah Smith's The Christian Secret to a Happy Life. That's a quietistic approach. That's sort of do nothing and He'll do it all kind of approach.

Charles Fenneytaught that. From time to time you find it in the writings of Wesley and others. This is the idea that all the believer has to do is just sort of flop on the Holy Spirit. The Spirit walk they say and this is fairly common to most quietistic views, the Spirit walk does not involve any effort on my part. In fact, wherever there is effort, I hinder the holiness that God wants to accomplish. So I absolutely must eliminate effort and surrender. That's the word. That's the word. If you read...I was reading the other day the convocation of 48 messages given my Kezic conferences, and I suppose as much as you see the word the, you see the word surrender. That was the word.

Now as long as we are in this attitude of surrender, we live virtuous holy lives. And normally the view continues to go on and teach us also a second work of grace. That you get so surrendered at one point in your life that the sin nature becomes eradicated. And at that point, you never sin again. Now I believe that it is true, and I want to get this right and God bless many of these quietists, because we're indebted to them, believe me. And some of them were nearly as extreme as others. But this is beyond Scripture. When you get to the place where you just don't do anything. Where you just sort of do nothing that because there's a problem here and the question I ask is this. Then let's say you're in a state of surrender and you're flopped and the Spirit of God is doing whatever He's doing. And then all of a sudden you sin. Who's fault is it? Well, that's a tough question. You say well it can't be my fault, because I surrender. Well, it can't be the Holy Spirit's fault, because He doesn't do that.

You say oh I know I took back my surrender. Well, that was sin too. Who prompted that? Who's fault was that? It's not that simple. Now the command to walk by the Spirit is very simple. But you see if it was all up to God, I'm not sure we'd need the command. The command is there to keep on walking in the Spirit, so I've got to have something to do with it. He says keep walking and that applies effort. This implies a moment by moment kind of commitment.

Well, the command is simple enough. I don't think we can over do it. I think we've got to be involved and I'll express more about that in a minute. But let's go secondly to the conflict. This is what makes the command tough. It was just a question of just sort of flopping down there, it'll be nothing to it, but you've got a little problem in verse 17. This is not easy. Now "the flesh lusts against the Spirit and

the Spirit against the flesh and these are contrary one to the other so that you can't do the things that you would." Well, thanks a lot Paul. First you say go ahead and walk by the Spirit, then you say it's going to be touch and it's going to be a fight and that's right. It's not just a question of simplicity. There is a struggle involved. And you know something it is true that you are a new creature in Christ. Yes, if any man be in Christ, new creature.

Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ." Ego, I am. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live." Now, I'm a new I and in my new I there is the capacity to sin, did you know that? It says it right there. And you know that's the first thing a new Christian usually finds out. He finds out that his life is a conflict, right? It's a conflict. Sure he's a new creature. Yes, he's an all new I, but in that all new I there is a capacity to sin because he's in the flesh, see? The physical body, he still bears the sin principle. Sin is still present. He's human, he hasn't been glorified yet. Believe me, we wait for the redemption of the body, right? Because when the body gets glorified then that's where the sin principle operates in the human body, the human mind we get glorified that's not a problem.

And the new Christian, just like the Christian, just like I do, he looks at the Scripture and he looks at the Scripture and he says there's God's pattern. I know what God's pattern is. I know what God wants. I know the way to get it. I know how to do it. But I have problems doing it. I know all about holiness. I know all about walking by the Spirit, but it seems to be a hassle all the time, right? And I think all of us would agree to that.

There is a pattern that is apparent. There is a command that is easy to understand, walk by the Spirit, but pulling it off is a little tough because there's a war on. Now let's look at the conflict and look at the various factors of verse 17 that bring the conflict to our attention. Verse 17 says, "The flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh." And these are contrary to one to the other so that you cannot do the things that you would. Do you know that the flesh actually restricts you from accomplishment? The man who is human, and that's everybody, has in him this conflict if he's a believer. Now note folks that if you're not a Christian you don't have any trouble. You just go on sinning and loving it.

There is no conflict, because the flesh lusts against the Spirit against the flesh. If you don't have the Holy Spirit, you've got no fight. This is a question of what the flesh elects to do. But for the believer there is a battle going on. There's a war raging. Now notice the word flesh. Let's talk about it a minute. What is the flesh? You say is this my body? No, I don't...I don't think...it's sometimes used like that, but basically it's a theological principle we have to get to and we will. The word is sarx. Sarx in the Greek. It's a very important term in Greek. It is used in the New Testament and without going into all kinds of detail, let me just say this. It is used in the New Testament in a number of different ways. For example, and I'll give you some if you want to jot them down. It is used to refer to the physical body without any theological implications. Just the plain old physical body. Secondly, it is used in a theological sense to refer to that part of man that becomes the beachhead to sin.

Whatever it is, it is the landing spot for Satan's temptation forces. Romans 4:1, "What shall we say that Abraham our father as pertaining to the flesh has found. And there the flesh is speaking of his humanness that issues only in sinfulness. Now the question is really this. The question that Paul is asking you is what did Abraham get by himself? Nothing. Did Abraham make himself righteous? No. What did his flesh produce? It didn't produce anything. It is that part of man that cannot produce anything but sin and it is the part of man that Satan attacks.

Let me define it another way. It refers in Romans 4:1 to all of Abrahams efforts apart from God. And in Galatians 3:3, it refers against to the same thing. You remember the verse that we looked at some time back, "Are you so foolish having begun in the Spirit are ye made perfect by the flesh?" Again it's self effort. It's the effort of a human to accomplish holiness on his own. And it doesn't work. And look at Galatians 6:12. The Judaisers wanted to make a show in the flesh. Again the flesh is used to speak of the lower nature, the element of man opposed to God and opposed to goodness and incapable of righteousness.

And let me tell you something else, it's using the Bible to speak of man's terrible weakness. Romans 6:19 says, "the infirmity of the flesh." Romans 7:18, Paul put it this and this sums it up, "In my flesh dwells," what, "no good thing." Whatever it is, the flesh theologically, it is that part of man that functions apart from God attempting to attain what it can't attain. Now some of the unsaved are said to be in the flesh. Romans 7:5, Paul says, "When we were in the flesh." Speaking as if he were unsaved.

But it doesn't just belong to the flesh. Do you know...to the unsaved. Do you know that Christians struggle with the flesh? Do you know that even though you're a new I, a new creation, you still have operating within you a propensity, some kind of a thing. Let's call it the flesh, it's a good biblical term. There is a thing there, let's call the sarx, and that is that thing which tends to function apart from God to accomplish it's own ends. And it works in everybody.

In Romans Chapter 7, I want to have you turn there for a minute, we get a good insight into the struggle that the flesh can put up against the Holy Spirit. Paul is a Christian and he says look, I've got a problem with the flesh, that just because I got saved doesn't mean I got rid of that problem. That doesn't happen until I go to heaven, then I get rid of this earthly flesh. Whatever this sarx thing is that gives sin it's place. But Romans 7:14, he says, "I am fleshly." The word carnal is the same word, sarx. "I am fleshly sold under sin." He says, sure I'm a believer, but I've got this thing in me, the compensity or this beachhead at which the forces of Satan always land. Temptation always gets me there. It is that part of a man which functions apart from goodness and apart from God. And it remains even in a believer.

And how does it work? Well, it creates terrible tension in a Christian. Look at verse 15 of Romans 7. And this sounds like Galatians which we just read. "For that which I do I understand not. For what I would that do I not, but what I hate that do I." You know how that works. That is so practical it's just amazing. You come here to church and you hear a sermon like this or some other sermon, you go out and you're saying to yourself, all the time I'm preaching you're saying, oh yes, amen. Oh yeah. Right on pastor, right on. You're right. Oh holiness is what God...you go right out all week and you sin. So do I. You say well, what's wrong. You...there it is and you've got this principle in you and that that you really wanted to do...if I asked everyone of you that really loved the Lord Jesus Christ if you wanted to sin, you'd say no, I don't want to sin, but you do.

He says, "That which I would I do not, but what I hate I do." Why? Because the principle is there fighting, warring against the Holy Spirit and sometimes it gains the victory. "If then I do that which I would not, I consent under the law that it is good." Nothing wrong with God's law. It's not His fault that I've got a problem. "Now then it is no more I that do it," watch, "but sin that dwells in me." There's the concept of sarx again. Whatever this thing is he calls it flesh and he calls it sin. It is a principle in us.

"I know that in me that is in my flesh dwells no good thing." It's not my will that gets me into trouble. He says, "For my will is present with me." At least when I sit back and organize my thoughts it isn't, but man when I get to the moment of temptation my will seems to get trampled. "For the will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." I have the desire. I just can't pull it off. "The good that I would, I do not. And the evil which I would not that, I do." Boy if that isn't the testimony of the Christian life I don't know what is.

Some people say this is Paul talking when he's not a Christian. Don't tell me that. There no unsaved man in the world has this problem. Struggling against the law of God in his heart, loving God's law? No, "I find a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me. Boy that's practical. I delight in the law of God after the inward man. I see another law in members warring against the law of my mind bringing me to captivity the law of sin, which is in my members. Oh wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." He says, I know the answer's in Christ somewhere. He doesn't find it in Chapter 7 incidentally.

Then he says, "So then with my mind I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." Now there you have the definition of the flesh. The flesh is that part of me that serves sin. It serves sin. Now beloved, the Christian then has to deal with the flesh. The flesh carries on a very effective work. You say well, John, how do you deal with the flesh? I'll give you two things. I love this. Hang on. "Walk by the Spirit and you shall not," what, "fulfill the lusts of the flesh." It's a positive. You take a positive approach and we'll get into the negative approach too. There's two sides to here. But let me give you a beautiful thought. You say what is walking by the Spirit mean?

Let me give you a parallel. Turn to Romans 13:14. And you have a very interesting, almost a parallel. Well, Romans 13:13 we ought to go to. And incidentally, he's talking almost in the same idea here. You know, he's talking about legalism as opposed to living in the Spirit. You know that love fulfills the whole law and all that in verse 10. But down in verse 13, "let us walk," that's good, we're walking again. "Honestly as in the day." Do you know what that means? Walk as if it was daylight and everything in your life could be exposed.

Isn't that good? You say in my case it's not good. It should be. "Let us walk honestly as in the day not in reveling, wild parties, drunkenness, immorality, the desire for the forbidden, wantonness." Interesting Greek word has to do with the bed, shamelessness. Now he says, don't walk like that, but verse 14, "But ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. Make not provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts." Now friends watch this. It is here said that if you put on the Lord Jesus Christ, you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

In Galatians, it says "if you walk in the Spirit, you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Then there's an easy conclusion, walking by the Spirit is the same as putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. For years I have said and I say it again and it's in the little book on the will of God that the Spirit filled life or walking by the Spirit is the very same thing as living a Christ like life. It is the saturation of my life with the person of Christ so that He dominates my thought patterns. So that I live in the consciousness of His presence. That is walking by the Spirit. For the work of the Spirit hasn't changed on bit from when Jesus said He would send the Spirit. His work is to point to Christ. And walking by the Spirit means that my life is patterned after the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the key. And so whether you want to define as putting on the Lord Jesus Christ if that helps you, that is, you know, I have to say that the more I studied the gospels and the more I came to know Jesus Christ, the more the Christian life meant to me. And the more fulfilling it was. The more I knew Christ.

That's why Paul said, "That I may know," what, "Him." The Spirit filled life or the Spirit walk is a sort of an equivalent to being saturated with Jesus Christ and so you see both statements tied to not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. So the concept of flesh then...you can go back to Galatians. The concept of flesh is that it refers to whatever part of me, and I mean you don't need to draw one, because you couldn't draw one. It's a spiritual dimension. But whatever that part of me is that offers natural effort independent of God and is the week helpless part of me where sin always lands and does its work.

All right, now that flesh lusts it says. Look at verse 17 again. "The flesh lusts." Now when you think of the word lust, you always think of, you know, sort of sex, sin, and all that. No, the word lust means it desires strongly or it yearns strongly. Now it's almost like contesting, struggling to accomplish something. So the flesh is smashing against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. It fights the Spirit to dominate the Christian.

I'll tell you something, it is not nearly such a problem to be concerned with what the devil's doing as to be concerned with your own flesh. And rather than run around worrying about the strategy of Satan, you ought to positively entertain yourself with the concept of putting on Jesus Christ and walking by the Spirit and everything takes care of itself. Now the Spirit and the flesh are at. The flesh fights the Spirit. The Spirit wants to do a work in your life, bang here comes the flesh. And it fights.

But you know the other thing that's going on too? Every time the flesh starts doing something the Spirit moves in and the Spirit against the flesh. That's good to know isn't it. It's good to know that as a Christian, your flesh doesn't get very activated until the Spirit moves in and creates some opposition and the struggle starts. So it goes both ways. But it's a fight, it's a battle. The war is on.

Now, as Christians, we should recognize that victory is available. You know, Jesus said in Matthew 26:41, "The Spirit is dwelling, but the flesh is," what, "is weak." That's good to know. I'm so happy about that, because the Spirit is not weak, right? Strong. In fact, Jesus in His high priestly prayer in John 17:2 claimed that He had been given power over all flesh. Paul said that God has done for us what the law could not do in that it was weakened by the flesh. Romans 8:3. The flesh is infirm, it is weak, it is just the lowest and the Spirit of God is absolute power. Isn't that good to know? Isn't that good to know that you have residing in you the absolute power of God fighting against the impotence of the flesh?

Now friend if you sin, you just gave up. You just copped out. It's certainly...you can't say well, the fight was on and the flesh won. Boy I was rooting for the Spirit all the way, I don't know what happened. No, no, just because a war's on doesn't mean both teams have the same strength, right? No, the Spirit is all powerful. There is no weakness. In fact, the Holy Spirit's all about helping our weakness, right? Romans 8:26. And so if we ally ourselves with the Spirit there's victory always, always, always more than conquerors.

But I'll tell you something, you can't be a quietist. You just can't flop and just say well, I'm just going to watch. And then when it's over well, I was rooting for you Holy Spirit. At some point in the battle, you've got to get in it. You say well, where do you get that out of the Bible? Well, Romans 6, now I'll tell you this is pretty strong language so get ready for this if you happen to be a quietist. Maybe you are and didn't know it, but by definition. In Romans 6:11...well, let's go to verse 12, Romans 6:12, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body." Now friends that is not a command of the Holy Spirit. That's a command to us. God is not saying now Holy Spirit, you do that job. No, He's saying look Christian, don't you let sin reign in your mortal body. Well, it indicates that if the command came to us then we could do something about it, right? That you should obey it in the lusts. Don't yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness."

So watch, we must first of all then determine to yield to the Spirit. You say well, you're still kind of on the quietistic wave length. That's fine, we'll get off of it in a minute. But there is a point in which I yield to the Spirit's control and that I do not yield myself to the flesh. I do not obey the lusts of the flesh resting in the Spirit's power. But I also get into the action. Romans 8, verse 12. "Therefore brethren we are debtors not to the flesh." Do you owe the flesh anything? Did the flesh every do anything for you? Anybody like to give a testimony to how the flesh has blessed their life? Never did anything for me.

We are not debtors to the flesh. There's no reason to pay any kind of attention to the flesh. We owe the flesh nothing. We've been liberated from the flesh by the cross. No we don't owe the flesh anything. Now if we live after the flesh, we die, but if you through the Spirit do kill the deeds of the body you shall live. You know what He says to do? He says get in there and kill the flesh. Boy I like that. How could you kill the flesh? Now that's an interesting concept. I think the best way to do it is to starve it to death.

You say well what do you mean by that? I mean, that if you don't ever feed anything it sort of shrivels. You know what I'm saying? If you feed the flesh, you know, when temptation is the worst is when you get yourself in a position to be tempted. You starve it out, negatively that's the view. You starve it out. You don't feed it. You don't give anything that appeals to it. You don't put yourself in a position to have the flesh entertained. It's not state of passive surrender friends. You're in on the killing. You're there. You're stomping on it. You are actively involved in it. You must put on the new man, Ephesians 4:24.

Colossians 3:5, I thought of another verse that may apply. It says, "Kill your members, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desire, covetousness." Kill it. Boy I mean, that's active stuff. Get in there and kill it. The Christian life is not a spectator sport. You know, you read in the Bible in Hebrews 12 that "we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses so let us run with patience the," what, "the race." And if you read 1 Corinthians 9:27, you'll find that the apostle Paul's fighting a boxing match. And he says, "I'll tell you what I do, I beat my body to bring it to subjection." He wasn't passive. He was not passive.

The Christian is actively involved in working in this area. I think of a Scripture that helps us to see this, 2 Timothy 2:3. "Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth and tangle with himself or the affairs of this life that he may please who hath chosen him to be a soldier." Now friends, if this a war and we're soldiers, that's not a by-stander. "And if a man strive for masteries, yet he's not crowned except he strived lawfully." Now there you have a runner. You've got the Christian life defined as a soldier and as a runner.

Thirdly, as a farmer. "The farmer that labors must be first partaker of the fruit." So he says look at the Christian life like this, a dedicated soldier, a runner who wants to win and a hardworking farmer. That's involvement people. That's involvement. Christian life is not something I watch. The Christian life that something that I'm totally absorbed in. Now here...now hang on to this. Here again, you come to the paradox of spiritual life that my life is not mine. It's Christ. At the same time it is I, yet not I, right?

You say, well, then who does live your Christian life, you or the Holy Spirit? It is all of the Spirit's power, but it must demand all of my yieldness and all of my commitment and all of my killing of the flesh. I don't know how the combination works. I just know this, that when I sin, I've never blamed the Holy Spirit. I know that. And if you do, there's something grossly wrong with your theology, because God has no part in sin. Now the opposite extreme to quietism is what's been historically pietism and that's the holy religion of effort. You've got to do it and self-discipline and struggle and pressing on, hurry, you know, that kind of stuff.

Well, you can turn that into legalist easily. You've got to have the balance and the balance is walking by the Spirit. Walking by the Spirit. Let me see if I can illustrate it to you. 2 Peter 1 maybe will help us. 2 Peter 1 just to give you an idea of how the Spirit works in and through the believer. I like this. 2 Peter 1:3, now just get this. Boy if this doesn't just boggle your brain when you think about your resources. According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." Oh man, I tell you, I get so excited about that verse, I can't stand it.

"All things that pertain to life and godliness are mine." When did I get them? Through the knowledge of Him that called us. The moment you believed. When you came into the knowledge of Christ you received everything. You say, you mean I have all power, all everything. All you need for life in godliness, wonderful. Then I don't have to do a thing. I'll just relax in all those things. Great and precious promises. Watch, "That by these you might be partakers of the divine nature and you've escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Wow, you say, you mean when I was saved I escaped all that lust and I've been delivered and I've got all these resources. Boy I'll just sit around. No, no, look at verse 5. "And beside this," I love this, "give all diligence to add to your faith virtue and to virtue knowledge and knowledge self-control, to self-control patience, to patience godliness, to godliness, brotherly kindness, to brotherly kindness love." You say who men? You just told me He gave me everything. Well, beside that, you do this. You see it is not just all the Holy Spirit and none of us. It's not all of us and none of Him, it's the perfect balance. And it's when He goes the way He goes and I go the way He goes with Him, that the balance works out.

Another Scripture that illustrates is Philippians 2, just listen, I'll read it to you. "Wherefore my beloved as ye have always obeyed not as in my presence only but now much more in my absence. Work out

your own salvation with fear and trembling." You mean me? You mean, I've got to work? Then verse 13 says this. "For it is God who works in you to will and do of His good pleasure." You say now who is it? Is it God or is it me? Yes. Definitely. The Spirit walk is yielding to the Holy Spirit, but it's also getting in on the kill and killing sin, stamping it out, don't feed it. Walk by the Spirit.

Well, let's close with just a quick look at verse 18 and we'll finish up maybe next time. Verse 18 says that "And if ye be led by the Spirit," if you follow that pattern, "you're not under the law." Why does he say you're not under the law? Well it's the same thing as he said in verse 16. Verse 16 he says, "Ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." It's the same thing, because when you were under the law, you couldn't conquer the flesh. So he says if you walk by the Spirit, no problem with the flesh. If you're led of the Spirit, no problem with the law.

To be under the law is to be unable to stop the lust of the flesh. So he says you're not number it any more. The law cannot stop sin. It stirs up sin. It reveals sin. Boy in Romans 7, Paul makes that so clear. Listen to what he says. "But sin taking occasion by the commandment wrought in the all manner of coveting. For I was alive apart from the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died and the commandment that was ordained to life I found to be unto death." God showed me His beautiful law and it just killed me. I couldn't keep it.

And so what he's saying here is, if you are being led of the Spirit, you are no longer under that terrible curse of the law. The Spirit fulfills the law. The Spirit conquers the flesh, tremendous, tremendous promise. The law doesn't do anything to make a mess. Reads Pilgram's Progress, Interpreter's House. A guy goes into Interpreter's House and there's a large room and it's full of dust. There's dust everywhere. Somebody comes in with a broom and starts sweeping the dust and everybody's gagging and coughing. Really a parable or analogy or the allegory says this, "An interpreter his mouth and says this parlor is the heart of a man that was never sanctified. The dust is his original sin. He that begins to sweep is the law."

All the law does is just make a mess, show you the dust. Then somebody came in later with water, which was the gospel and sprinkled water everywhere. Listen to 1 Corinthians 15:56, "The power of sin is the law." The law makes sin what it is. In the first place, if there's no law, there's no sin. So the law comes to automatic, there's sin. In the second place, there's no capacity to obey the law. The provokes sin. I think it's Pete Gillquist who has an illustration in his book. If you have two houses built with beautiful big huge bay windows and they're built identically the same and one guy puts a sign on his lawn, do not break the window. Who's window gets broken first?

The law has a certain provocative quality. But if you be led by the Spirit you're no longer left under the law to be provoked to sin. Now what does it mean to be led by the Spirit? That's an important doctrine beloved. I think basically it just means the same as to walk by the Spirit, but it does imply something else. It implies that the Spirit is leading. In Romans 8:14, it says, "As many as are led by

the Spirit, they are," what, "sons of God." So conversely, all the sons of God are being what? Led by the Spirit. Every Christian is being led by the Spirit. You don't need to pray Holy Spirit lead me. He is doing that.

If you want to pray something, just ask Him to teach you how to follow. He is doing that. And if you're being led by the Spirit, you're not under the law. If you have the Holy Spirit living in you, you're not under the law, because God only gives His Spirit to people who have accepted Him by grace. Everybody else is under the law, right? Would you like to be out from under the law of God, the wrath of God, the judgment of God, except Jesus Christ. He gives you His Holy Spirit. The fact that you're led by the Spirit means you're no longer under the law system.

Everybody in the world's under one of two systems. They're either under the Spirit or under the law. But if you're led by the Spirit, you're not under the law. Boy that's where I want to be. So every Christian possesses the Spirit and the Spirit leads, the Spirit guides. John 16:13, the Holy Spirit's going to be a guide, He directs. He leads every Christian. We're not under the law. We're under His leading, not under the external, under the internal. Now if He's leading, what's our part? Verse 16, to what? "To walk where He leads." If we know what He's doing, where He's leading, we're to walk in that way.

The blind man of Jericho was led to Jesus, Luke 18. If you just point the way for a blind man, it doesn't do him a lot of good. You've got to take him by the hand and lead him. When the Holy Spirit comes into the life of a believer, He will lead you. He will lead you if you will walk. You'll not fulfill the lust of the flesh. The very fact that He leads you means you're not under law, because you wouldn't even have Him if you were under law. Do you see what I'm saying?

You say well when He leads where does He go? Without getting into a big discussion, let me give you eight places the Holy Spirit leads you. To freedom, Galatians 5:1, to holiness, Galatians 5:16, to the word, John 16:14, "He leads you into all," what, "truth." To fruitfulness, Galatians 5:22, the fruit of the Spirit. He leads you into prayer or entrance into God, Ephesians 2:18. He leads you to assurance. The Spirit is in us showing us that we're the sons of God, Romans 8:16. He leads you to witness, Acts 1:8. He leads you to submission and submission means joy, Ephesians 5:18. The one who's filled with the Spirit speaks in Psalms spiritual songs and finally it says submitting himself one to another.

So the Spirit leads us to freedom, holiness, the word fruitfulness, prayer, assurance, witnessing and submissive joy. That's where He's leading. And if you're walking that's where you're at. You don't need a lot of rules beloved. Spirit's doing the leading. Well, what happened to the Galatians? They started well. They stopped following the Spirit and started following the flesh. Don't do that.

Romans 8:3-4 sums all that we've said up beautifully in the words of the Holy Spirit. "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh. God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemns sin in the flesh that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but" what, "after the Spirit." God wanted to accomplish the law. He does it as we walk in the Spirit.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for helping us see this tonight rich, rich time study in Your book. Lord, we've just begun really to examine some things. Help us to keep our thoughts clear enough so that next time we come together we can again be taught of the Holy Spirit building on what we have learned tonight. We thank You for the Holy Spirit for His ministry in our lives. We thank You for the fact that He continually intercedes for us in a day by day ministry. We thank You for the marvelous promise that He secures for us the reward, our home in heaven. We thank You for the promise as well in the day to day life that we live as we walk step by step with Him. We find ourselves fulfilling the law of God.

And now as we close our fellowship together for this time in this hour, we pray that Your Spirit would superintend and accomplish in our hearts what He would desire to do in Jesus' name. Amen.

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