

Proposition: The successful Christian life is the result of a cooperative undertaking between you and the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:16-26

¹⁶ But I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ But if you are **led by the Spirit**, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ *Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,* ²⁰ *idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions,* ²¹ *envy,^[a] drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do^[a] such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.* ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

²⁵ If we **live by the Spirit**, let us also **keep in step with the Spirit**. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

The Struggle is Real. (vs. 16-21)

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ **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. ¹⁸ But if you are **led by the Spirit**, you are not under the law.

- **It is an unseen struggle.** (Within you – Spirit and desires of the flesh) (vs. 16)
- **It is an intense struggle.** ("against the Spirit & flesh..." "opposed to each other...") (vs. 17a)
- **It can be a frustrating struggle.** (vs. 17b) ("...to keep you from doing the things you want to do.") Romans 7.
- **It is a struggle that can be overcome.** (vs. 18) ("...if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.)
- **It is a struggle unique to followers of Jesus.** (vs. 19-21)

¹³ 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.

¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, ^[a] drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do ^[b] such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

The evidence of slavery to your flesh. (19-21) [in groupings of 3's and 2's]

- **You are consumed with sex. (19)**

- sexual immorality (*porneia*): to engage in sexual immorality of any kind, fornication...often with the implication of prostitution.
- impurity (*akatharsia*): any substance which is filthy or dirty; a state of moral corruption, immorality, vileness especially when connected to sexual sins.
- sensuality (*aselgeia*): behavior completely lacking in moral restraint, usually with the implication of sexual licentiousness... extreme immorality.

- **You are obsessed with hobbies and sports. (20a)**

- Idolatry (*eidōlōlatría*): image-worship, idol worship (I Cor. 10:14)
- Sorcery (*pharmakeia*): the use of magic, often involving drugs and the casting of spells upon people. [THE BETTING BUSINESS]

- **You are paranoid and defensive. (20b)**

- Enmity (*echthraî*): a state of enmity with someone – being an enemy; hatred.
- Strife (*eris*): to argue, quarrel, or dispute.
- Jealousy (*zēlos*): eager rivalry; to have deep concern for, to be devoted to, earnest concern.

- **You are angry and contentious. (20c)**

- Fits of anger (*thymoi*): an intense, passionate desire of an overwhelming and possibly destructive character – intense desire, overwhelming passion.
- Rivalries (*eritheiai*): strife, contentiousness; a feeling of hostility or opposition.

- **You think you are always right. (20d)**

- Dissensions (*dichostasiaî*): sedition; a division into opposing groups.
- Divisions (*haireseis*): sect, party; a division or group based upon different doctrinal opinions and/or loyalties and hence by implication in certain contexts an unjustified party or group.
- Envy (*phthonoi*): ill-will; malice; a state of ill will toward someone because of some real or presumed advantage experienced by such a person.

- **You are addicted to pleasure seeking. (21b)**

- Drunkenness (*methai*): become drunk on alcoholic beverages; strong drink.
- Orgies (*kōmoi*): drinking parties involving unrestrained indulgence in alcoholic beverages and accompanying immoral behavior – orgy, reveling, carousing.

An Eskimo And His Fighting Dogs

An Eskimo fisherman came to town every Saturday afternoon. He always brought his two dogs with him. One was white and the other was black. He had taught them to fight on command. Every Saturday afternoon in the town square the people would gather and these two dogs would fight and the fisherman would take bets. On one Saturday the black dog would win; another Saturday, the white dog would win but the fisherman always won! His friend began to ask him how he did it. He said, "I starve one and feed the other. The one I feed always wins because he is stronger." This story about the two dogs tells us something about the inner *warfare* that comes into the life of a person who is born again. We have two natures within us, both struggling for mastery. Which one will dominate us? It depends on which one we feed." (Billy Graham. *The Holy Spirit*. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1988, pp. 92-93).

The Struggle is Real. (vs. 16-17)

The Solution is Simple. (vs. 16-26)

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- **Walk by the Spirit.** (vs. 16)
 - **Walk** (*peripateite*) verb, present, active, imperative: to go about, walk around. [Your choice or responsibility.]
 - **The implication here is to trust the Holy Spirit to provide you the help, comfort, and guidance that characterizes who He is in Scripture.**
 - **The Command of Love**

- **Be led by the Spirit.** (vs. 18)
 - **Be led** (*agesthe*) verb, present, passive, indicative: to move away from a reference point, to leave. [God's divine activity or work in you.]
 - **You are not *under the law* but guided by the Spirit through His Word.**
 - **The Message of Love**
- **Live by the Spirit.** (vs. 22-25a)
 - **Live** (*zōmen*) verb, present, active, indicative: to be alive, to live, life: a picture of a healthy person as opposed to a sick or dead person. [Your choice or responsibility.]
 - **Vs. 24: Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with all its passions and desires.** [Your choice or responsibility.]
 - **Crucified** (*estaurōsan*) verb, aorist, active, indicative: literally 'to hang on a tree' to execute by nailing to a cross
 - **The flesh** (*sarka*) physical body
 - **With its passions** (*pathēmasin*) an inward experience of an affective nature, feeling, interest in a bad sense (not limited to but often connected to sexual desires)
 - **And desires** (*epithymiais*) a desire for something forbidden or simply inordinate, craving, lust
 - **The description of the fruit (singular) of the Spirit as seen in verses 22-23.** [God's divine activity or work in you.]¹

Galatians 5:22–23 (BKC):

The power for victory over sin (5:22–23). There is a pointed contrast here. As verse 16 indicated, there is no need for a believer to display the works of the flesh. Rather, by the Spirit's power he can manifest the nine graces that are now listed. It is important to observe that the fruit here described is not produced by a believer, but by the Holy Spirit working through a Christian who is in vital union with Christ (cf. John 15:1–8). The word "fruit" is *singular*, indicating that these qualities constitute a unity, all of which should be found in a believer who lives under the control of the Spirit. In an ultimate sense this "fruit" is simply the life of Christ lived out in a Christian. It also points to the method whereby Christ is formed in a believer (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 1:21).

The first three virtues are habits of mind which find their source in God.

- **Love (agapē)** is listed first because it is the foundation of the other graces. God is love and loves the world (cf. 1 John 4:8; John 3:16). Such self-sacrificing love that sent Christ to die for sinners is the kind of love that believers who are Spirit-controlled manifest.
- **Joy (chara)** is a deep and abiding inner rejoicing which was promised to those who abide in Christ (cf. John 15:11). It does not depend on circumstances because it rests in God's sovereign control of all things (cf. Rom. 8:28).

¹ <https://www.lwf.org/fruit-of-the-spirit>

- **Peace (eirēnē)** is again a gift of Christ (cf. John 14:27). It is an inner repose and quietness, even in the face of adverse circumstances; it defies human understanding (cf. Phil. 4:7).

The second triad reaches out to others, fortified by love, joy, and peace.

- **Patience (makrothymia)** is the quality of forbearance under provocation (cf. 2 Cor. 6:6; Col. 1:11; 3:12). It entertains no thoughts of retaliation even when wrongfully treated.
- **Kindness (chrēstotēs)** is benevolence in action such as God demonstrated toward men. Since God is kind toward sinners (cf. Rom. 2:4; Eph. 2:7) a Christian should display the same virtue (cf. 2 Cor. 6:6; Col. 3:12).
- **Goodness (agathōsynē)** may be thought of both as an uprightness of soul and as an action reaching out to others to do good even when it is not deserved.

The final three graces guide the general conduct of a believer who is led by the Spirit.

- **Faithfulness (pistis)** is the quality which renders a person trustworthy or reliable, like the faithful servant in Luke 16:10–12.
- **Gentleness (prautēs)** marks a person who is submissive to God's Word (cf. James 1:21) and who is considerate of others when discipline is needed (cf. "gently" in Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:25; "gentle" in 1 Cor. 4:21; Eph. 4:2; "gentleness" in Col. 3:12; 1 Peter 3:16).
- **Self-control (enkrateia)**; this noun is used in the NT only here and in Acts 24:25; 2 Peter 1:6) denotes self-mastery and no doubt primarily relates to curbing the fleshly impulses just described. Such a quality is impossible to attain apart from the power of God's Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:16). As a final summary statement Paul affirmed that there are no prohibitions (lit., there is not a law) against such virtues. In a litotes (understatement) he asserted that obviously no one would make laws against people who practice such things.

○ **The Description of Love**

I have heard it said that the other fruits are just a description or expansion of the first, that if you have the fruit of love, you will be full of joy. Love will take away your anxious thoughts and will give you perfect peace. Love in action will make you patient with others as an expression of that love. Love expresses itself in kindness. Love brings out all that is good. Love brings us into a faithful trust. Love compels us to put the needs of others ahead of our needs, producing self-control.²

- **Keep in Step with the Spirit.** (vs. 25b-26)
 - **Keep in step (stoichōmen)** verb, present, active, subjunctive: to live in conformity with some presumed standard or set of customs – 'to live, to behave in accordance with.' [Your choice or responsibility.]
 - **Esteeming other higher than yourself.**
 - **Not conceited (kenodoxoi)** pertaining to being proud without basis or justification – 'falsely proud' [Antonym: HUMILITY]
 - **Provoking one another (prokaloumenoi)** verb, present, middle, participle: to call out to someone to come forward in a hostile way... to challenge someone [Antonym: BEING A PEACE-MAKER]

² <https://gostonebridge.com/2013721love-is-the-greatest-of-all-the-fruits-of-the-spirit-html/>

- **Envy** **one another** (*phthonountes*) verb, present, active, participle: to experience a feeling of ill will due to real or presumed advantage experienced by someone else – ‘to be envious, to be jealous’ [Antonym: BEING CONTENT]

- **The Manifestation of Love**

- **Seen in Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:2-5)**
- **Seen through us toward other believers.**

APPLICATION:

What’s growing in the garden of your soul?

- The fruit of the flesh or the fruit of the Spirit

What needs to change on your end?

- Return to a consistent walk with God.
- Yield to the Spirit’s leading.
- Align your thoughts with the mind of Christ.