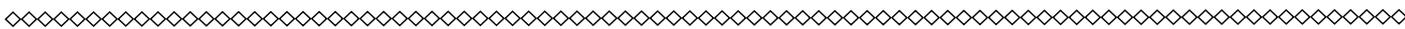




Pastor of the
International
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many.

Sermon Brief
Text: Gal. 5:16-26
Title: The Gift of the Spirit
Lorin L. Cranford

Seeking to faith-
fully proclaim
the whole coun-
cil of God in
scripture!



INTRODUCTION

One of the most important grace gifts that God gives is His own Spirit. At our spiritual birth in conversion we received the Holy Spirit into our life, and He is to play a major role in our spiritual journey through life. The nature and details of that role are mentioned in several places throughout the New Testament. In a once for all gifting the Holy Spirit was given to the church on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Salvation comes to the individual believer through the work of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). In this action, the Holy Spirit “justifies” believer, acquitting them of sin (1 Cor 6:11). He then initiates the lifelong process of sanctification (Rom 15:16; 2 Thess 2:13), producing attributes such as love, righteousness, peace, joy, and hope. These are well-epitomized as the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal 5:22-23). Additionally, numerous other ministries of the Spirit in and through believers are described in the New Testament.¹

Of all of the biblical texts that touch on the role of the Holy Spirit, Gal. 5:16-26 is the most detailed and extensive discussion of the Holy Spirit in the Bible. Hear Paul’s insights on the ministry of the Spirit of Christ in the believer’s life:

16 Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, 21 envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. 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 be guided by the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.²

A word about context is important at this point. Paul’s discussion of the Holy Spirit in verses thirteen through twenty-six stand as a part of the so-called Exhortatio section in 5:1-6:10. The distinctive rhetorical structure of Paul’s Exhortatio becomes clear with the realization that 5:1 is foundational to all three sets of admonitions: “For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” This declaration is closely linked to the Sarah/Hagar allegory in 4:21-31 and grows out of it. But it also serves as the foundational header for the Exhortatio. The principle is stated in the first part: “For freedom Christ has set us free.” Christian freedom here is deliverance from Torah obedi-



¹Craig L. Blomberg summarizes the ministry of the Holy Spirit: “A biblical theology of the Spirit is difficult to epitomize. He sovereignly acts as he chooses! Most Christian traditions stress the data of certain portions of Scripture (most notably Acts or Paul) at the expense of others. But an essential summary ought to include at least that the Spirit is the transcendent, omnipresent spiritual and localizable presence of God’s personality and power, living in and divinely empowering all of God’s true people in diverse and incomplete ways that foreshadow their complete, future renewal at the end of the age.” [Craig L. Blomberg, “Holy Spirit,” *Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* online]

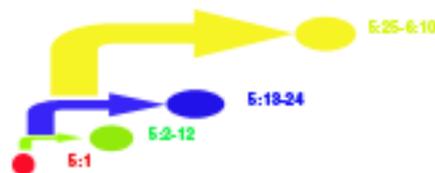
²GNT: ^{5.16}λέγω δέ, πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς οὐ μὴ τελέσητε. ^{5.17}ἡ γὰρ σὰρξ ἐπιθυμεῖ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα κατὰ τῆς σαρκὸς, ταῦτα γὰρ ἀλλήλοις ἀντίκειται, ἵνα μὴ ἂ ἐὰν θέλητε ταῦτα ποιῆτε. ^{5.18}εἰ δὲ πνεύματι ἄγεσθε, οὐκ ἔστε ὑπὸ νόμον. ^{5.19}φανερὰ δέ ἐστιν τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκὸς, ἅτινά ἐστιν πορνεία, ἀκαθαρσία, ἀσέλγεια, ^{5.20}εἰδωλολατρία, φαρμακεία, ἔχθραι, ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθείαι, διχοστασίαι, αἰρέσεις, ^{5.21}φθόνοι, μέθαι, κῶμοι καὶ τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις, ἃ προλέγω ὑμῖν καθὼς προεῖπον ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες βασιλείαν θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν.

^{5.22}Ὁ δὲ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος ἐστὶν ἀγάπη χαρὰ εἰρήνη, μακροθυμία χρηστότης ἀγαθὴ σὺνη, πίστις ^{5.23}πραύτης ἐγκράτεια· κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος. ^{5.24}οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τὴν σάρκα ἐσταύρωσαν σὺν τοῖς παθήμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις. ^{5.25}εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν. ^{5.26}μὴ γινώμεθα κενόδοξοι, ἀλλήλους προκαλούμενοι, ἀλλήλους φθονοῦντες.

ence, not a blank check of freedom to do whatever one pleases. The imposition of the Law as a requirement for salvation enslaves the Christian into a legalistic approach, which can never answer the question, “Have I done enough?” Paul’s Damascus Road experience had delivered him from such thinking. In Christ he had been liberated from this religious legalism so that now he could serve Christ out of love and devotion without being plagued by this legalistic question.

The second part of this header is the admonition to “Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” To accept the Judaizers’ demand of Torah obedience was to be enslaved again by religious legalism. Paul’s passionate plea to the Galatians was to reject these demands, and to stand firm in the apostolic gospel that had set them free from this religious legalism. Inside each set of admonitions he will define both the critical importance of rejecting Torah obedience, as well as the moral implications of the apostolic gospel. In the process he sets forth his “doctrine of Christian living” in greater detail and with more profundity than anywhere else in his writings.

The signal for each section of the three admonitions will be a modified reproduction of this foundational admonition in 5:1. In 5:13, the header for that section plays off 5:1 as follows: “For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another.” Again the principle followed by the admonition is the reproduced structure that sets the direction for verses 14-24. The third division is signaled in 5:25 as “If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.” In this conditional sentence (1st class protasis in the Greek) both the principle (“Since we live by the Spirit”) and the admonition (“let us walk in lockstep agreement with the Spirit”) are compressed into a single, short declaration. This sets the stage for the admonitions in 5:26-6:10.



A careful examination of the three sets of admonitions reveals a stair-casing effect. That is, the second set builds off the first set, and the third set builds off the second set. But all three sets are based upon the foundation header in 5:1.

What is the implication of this contextual setting for our text? Precisely this: the Holy Spirit in the believer means Christian freedom. And Christian freedom in Paul means freedom from bondage to sin that produces spiritual death. Also, it means freedom from the crippling religious legalism that Paul experienced as a Jewish Pharisee when trying to save himself through good works. Christian freedom does not mean freedom to do what I please. To the contrary, the freedom that comes through Christ is freedom to become a slave to God with Christ as the absolute Lord of our life. Only in this spiritual freedom can we experience life as intended by God with profound meaning and fulfillment. It is against this backdrop that the Holy Spirit plays a critical role in our lives. Without His presence and leadership we are doomed to religious legalism and a life with little meaning and certainly with no lasting ministry to others. So experiencing true Christian freedom and the presence of the Holy Spirit are inseparable realities.

What role does the Spirit play in our lives according to verses 13 through 16? Paul sets forth three areas of critical importance here.

BODY

I. Inner conflict can be overcome only by the Spirit. vv. 16-18.

16 Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law.

^{5.16}Λέγω δέ, πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς οὐ μὴ τελέσητε. ^{5.17}ἡ γὰρ σὰρξ ἐπιθυμεῖ κατὰ τοῦ πνεύματος, τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα κατὰ τῆς σαρκός, ταῦτα γὰρ ἀλλήλοις ἀντίκειται, ἵνα μὴ ἂ ἐὰν θέλητε ταῦτα ποιῆτε. ^{5.18}εἰ δὲ πνεύματι ἄγεσθε, οὐκ ἔστέ ὑπὸ νόμον.

Everyone of us has a war going on down inside us! For some folks not much conflict is taking place for surrender to the temptations of the Devil through fleshly desire has already largely taken place. But I guarantee you this: when you get serious about living for and pleasing Christ the conflict cranks up big time. Who are the combatants? Not you. You are the target of the conflict. The warfare is focused on control of you. Who wins the battle? Which ever side you choose. The two opposing enemies in this battle are your fleshly desires and the Holy Spirit. Satan stands behind your fleshly desires, but Paul and others in the New Testament put primary stress on our corrupted sinful nature as the source of our problems rather than allowing us to blame our failures on the devil.

Before coming to Christ we were in the total grip of our sinful flesh and were enslaved to it. Thus we were living in spiritual death, and were headed to eternal damnation. But



when Christ came into our life, the Holy Spirit took up residence inside us. The transformation He brought about in our life was a conversion to live in a holy manner to God, rather than in sinful rebellion against God. God now owns our life and expects us to walk in His ways. In order to do that we have to have empowerment from God. The indwelling Spirit of God provides just that empowerment. But as long as we are living in our physical bodies the old fleshly nature will seek to reclaim control over our life. It continues to be present in us until physical death comes, even though having been conquered by God in Christ.³

Here then is where the conflict arises. Our commitment now is to follow God's leadership, but our fleshly nature, the launch pad of temptation for the devil, resists and seeks to reclaim control. The indwelling Spirit of Christ opposes these efforts and does battle against the flesh seeking to prevent it from regaining the upper hand in our lives. Have you ever noticed how uncomfortable pagans are in the presence of truly holy people? Jesus' own life exemplifies this dramatically. He lived a perfectly holy life, and it made even so-called religious people extremely uncomfortable. Enough so that they plotted ways to execute Him in order to be free of the threats that His holiness posed to them. Sin hates God's holy presence. And especially in the life of a believer! Every possible effort to taint and destroy that holiness will be attempted.

At the end of this pericope, v. 18, Paul brings another angle into the picture of this conflict. Our fleshly nature will seek to use the holy Law of God as leverage to regain control. On its own, sin can't put enough pressure on us to force us to give in to its demands. It has been weakened too much by the defeat delivered it by Jesus on the cross. So it reaches out to God's Law as a spiritual 'billy club' to beat us down into defeat. The haunting sense of utter failure under the microscope of God's Law is piled on us by the flesh. The intent is to wear us down and regain control. The appeal is to convince us that we've got to please God on our own by keeping His Law. The devil knows full well that we can't and that we won't. But deception is the optimal word here. Religious legalism is held up as the way to go. If we're not careful we will succumb to such temptation. Every religion outside Christianity works off religious legalism. And religious legalism is extensively found even inside Christianity. So it is a huge temptation to us as believers.

All through verses 16-18, the main point of Paul has been the victory over sin and temptation possible through the leadership of the Holy Spirit. The foundational principle comes at the beginning in verse sixteen: "Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh." This translation by the New Revised Standard Version is not correct. The Greek text, πνεύματι περιπατεῖτε καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς οὐ μὴ τελέσητε, actually declares: "Be walking by means of the Spirit and there is no possible way for you to carry out the desire of the flesh." Walking is a metaphor for living, especially with an ethical or behavioral emphasis. The present tense imperative form of the Greek verb περιπατεῖτε underscores ongoing pattern of living. The two main clauses in this sentence are structured in the Greek according to a common ancient Hebrew thought pattern called command / promise. That is, God issues a command and backs it up with a promise. God tells us to continuously live under the control of the Holy Spirit. What will be the outcome? The second statement, ἐπιθυμίαν σαρκὸς οὐ μὴ τελέσητε, is set up in the Greek as a prohibitive Aorist tense verb with the use of a double negative modifying the verb. That results in the following translation: "and there is no possible way for you to carry out the desire of the flesh." That is, God promises us that if we live under the Spirit's leadership, fleshly desire can't touch us. It's allurements will fall off us like water off a duck's back. Holiness then will be the way we live out our life. Not through self effort, but as the product of the Spirit's leadership.

We must choose which way we go. Walk with the Spirit, or live in enslavement to fleshly desire. The next two text segments spell out the consequences of our choice. With the flesh option, definite consequences come. But with the Spirit another set of entirely different consequence come.

II. Fleshly living can be overcome only by the Spirit. vv. 19-21

19 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, 21 envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

^{5.19}φανερὰ δὲ ἐστὶν τὰ ἔργα τῆς σαρκὸς, ἅτινά ἐστιν πορνεία, ἀκαθαρσία, ἀσέλγεια, ^{5.20}εἰδωλολατρία,

³Rom. 8:10-16 (NRSV): 10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you. 12 So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh — 13 for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. 15 For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

φαρμακεία, ἔχθραι, ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθείαι, διχοστασίαι, αἰρέσεις, ^{5,21}φθόνοι, μέθαι, κῶμοι καὶ τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις, ἃ προλέγω ὑμῖν καθὼς προεῖπον ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες βασιλείαν θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν.

What the apostle portrays here is a Pandora's Box of evil that is possible in every person's life when they come under the sway of fleshly desire. Some fifteen vices are named and then an all inclusive reference, "things like these" (καὶ τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις), comes at the end. This [lengthy vice list](#) catalogues a series of attitudes and actions that arise when our old nature is in charge of running our lives.⁴ This is in-line with the other vice lists found throughout the New Testament. To give in to the tempting pressures of our old nature is to live like a pagan who doesn't know Christ! And from the implication of Paul's words here, it strongly suggests that such a person actually doesn't know Christ, even though a professing Christian.

Notice the range of attitudes and actions that the 'flesh' will produce if given the chance in our lives. The first three are immoral behaviors: "fornication, impurity, licentiousness" (πορνεία, ἀκαθαρσία, ἀσέλγεια). Quite simply, God calls us to live holy lives. Our sinful nature is bent toward immorality, particularly sexual immorality. The first vice listed, πορνεία, has to do with sexual activity outside of marriage. Uncleanness, ἀκαθαρσία, alludes to the sense of dirtiness that comes with an immoral lifestyle. If you have ever been around pornographic movie theaters etc. you know exactly what is mentioned here. Just to be in the presence of such filth makes one feel dirty inside and out. The third vice, "licentiousness" ἀσέλγεια, alludes to the deepening perversion of sexual immorality that envelops one's total life. People, when in moments of temptation you side with the 'flesh' and not with the Holy Spirit, you are allowing into your life the possibility of huge perversion and destruction!

The next two vices, "idolatry, sorcery" (εἰδωλολατρία, φαρμακεία), have a religious tone. The flesh has a religious side, but always perverted and twisted into something destructive and harmful. Bad religion comes from the flesh, not from God.

The third set of vices reflect both attitudes and actions toward other individuals: "enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy" (ἔχθραι, ἔρις, ζῆλος, θυμοί, ἐριθείαι, διχοστασίαι, αἰρέσεις, φθόνοι.). But these are not healthy, productive relationships described here. Just the opposite! Give into the flesh and your relationships with people go down the toilet! Both the attitudes and actions here focus on one's own wishes and demands in a hurrifically self-centered way of living. Human relationships always lead to disaster when self-sacrifice and unselfishness are not dominating them. The flesh will lead you astray here!

The last pair of vices, "drunkenness, carousing" (μέθαι, κῶμοι), mark off drunkenness and the destructive lifestyle that goes with it. μέθαι is often linked to κῶμοι in ancient literature, because the excessive drinking at banquets honoring this god or that goddess nearly always led to sexual orgies. This was particularly true of the god Dionysus, or Bacchus).

As Paul realized, such a short list of vices only touched the 'tip of the iceberg' of possible wrongdoing. So the concluding reference, "things like these" (καὶ τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις), extends to cover any vice not already mentioned.

Folks, note the utter degradation of human life depicted here. A person created in the image of a holy God under the sway of the flesh can turn into something sub-animal like, much less sub-human. Paul's point is forcefully this: open the door to the flesh and you open the door to this destructiveness in your own life.

Paul's final word here is chilling: "I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." For those whose life is lived out under the control of the flesh filling their lives with

⁴On the arrangement of these items note the observations of Richard Longenecker, Word Biblical Commentary: "Of note regarding this catalogue of vices is the fact that the fifteen items seem to be listed without order or system. There have, of course, been many attempts to organize them into categories. Most popular of these is the fourfold classification of Lightfoot (Galatians, [1890], 210) and Burton (Galatians, 304): (1) three sins of sensuality (i.e., sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery); (2) two associated with heathen religions (i.e., idolatry and witchcraft); (3) eight having to do with conflict among people (i.e., hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envy); and (4) two that have to do with drunkenness and its natural consequences (i.e., drunkenness and orgies). This fourfold classification has been taken over by NEB and NIV, though a fivefold grouping has also been popularized by JB (dividing the sins that have to do with conflict among people into two sets of five and three). It seems best, however, to take this list of fifteen vices as something of "a random collection of terms, describing the ordinary occurrences of evil among men" (so Betz Galatians, 283; cf. J. Thomas, TZ 24 [1968] 15–28; Mussner, Galaterbrief, 381), as set out by Luther and KJV (though with the two additions of "adultery" and "murders" à la the TR of their day) and as followed by RSV (without the two additions), for the expression καὶ τὰ ὅμοια τούτοις ("and the like") seems to have reference to all the items in the list and not just to drunkenness and orgies. If, in fact, there is any emphasis to be seen in this list of vices, it is probably to be found in the first vice, πορνεία ("sexual immorality"). That is where in a Greek structure one would expect anything being stressed to be placed; furthermore, the parallel list of virtues starts with what appears to be an emphasis on ἀγάπη ("love")."

these actions and attitudes, there is no salvation. Only God's wrath at the end of the road in final judgment. It matters not whether you call yourself a Christian or not. If you're living under the influence of the flesh, the simple, unavoidable truth is that you're headed straight to Hell, and not Heaven. All you will hear on Judgment Day is the haunting declaration of the Eternal Judge of all humankind, "I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers" (Matt. 7:23).

Only by the power of the Holy Spirit can these temptations of the flesh be resisted and rejected.

III. Fruitful living comes only through the Spirit. vv. 22-26

22 By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. 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 be guided by the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.

^{5.22}Ὁ δὲ καρπὸς τοῦ πνεύματος ἐστὶν ἀγάπη, χαρὰ, εἰρήνη, μακροθυμία, χρηστότης, ἀγαθωσύνη, πίστις ^{5.23}πραύτης, ἐγκράτεια· κατὰ τῶν τοιούτων οὐκ ἔστιν νόμος. ^{5.24}οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τὴν σάρκα ἐσταύρωσαν σὺν τοῖς παθήμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις. ^{5.25}εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν. ^{5.26}μὴ γινώμεθα κενόδοξοι, ἀλλήλους προκαλοῦμενοι, ἀλλήλους φθονοῦντες.

When we opt to go with the Holy Spirit in this internal warfare, a whole different life emerges. In place of destructiveness there comes life abundant and rich. The flesh produces 'works,' but the Spirit produces 'fruit.' The point of the contrast is between negative and positive outcomes. Fruit is a positive harvest.⁵ And the source of the fruit is God.

Paul paints a marvelous picture of the kind of life produced from following the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Again, no highly structured order in the virtue list of fruits is intended by Paul.⁶ But some grouping of traits does seem to be present.

What kind of life emerges when we follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit? The qualities of "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (ἀγάπη, χαρὰ, εἰρήνη, μακροθυμία, χρηστότης, ἀγαθωσύνη, πίστις, πραύτης, ἐγκράτεια) are the result of walking with Him. Whereas the first 'work' of the flesh is sexual immorality (πορνεία), the first 'fruit' of the Spirit is love (ἀγάπη). The final 'work' of the flesh is carousing (κῶμοι), but the final 'fruit' of the Spirit is self-control (ἐγκράτεια). The difference between the two paths is dramatic, and opposite of one another. These nine virtues produced in us by the Spirit of God lead to the wholesome, meaningful life otherwise impossible to discover apart from God. No sensible human being would not desire such a life as described here by Paul. And this is exactly what God wants to

⁵Richard Longenecker, *Word Biblical Commentary*: "The term καρπός ("fruit") appears in a literal sense in 1 Cor 9:7 ("Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit?") and 2 Tim 2:6 ("The hardworking farmer should be the first to share in its fruits"). Elsewhere in Paul's letters, however, καρπός is used in a figurative sense as a metaphor (1) for converts won to Christ (cf. Rom 1:13; Col 1:6), (2) for the expressions of a godly life (cf. Rom 6:22; 7:4; Eph 5:9; Phil 1:11; 4:17; Col 1:10), (3) for the expressions of an ungodly life (cf. Rom 6:21; 7:5; Eph 5:11), and (4) for the gift of money Paul was taking to Jerusalem from his Gentile churches (Rom 15:28)."

⁶Richard Longenecker, *Word Biblical Commentary*: "As with the catalogue of vices of vv 19–21, so here in vv 22–23 the list of virtues is given without any necessary order or system. Some have attempted to classify the nine items in terms of three groups of three each: the first three having to do with dispositions of the mind ("love," "joy," "peace"); the second with qualities affecting human relations ("patience," "kindness," "goodness"); and the third with principles that guide conduct ("faithfulness," "gentleness," "self-control"). Such an ordering was popularized by Lightfoot (Galatians [1890], 212), and is carried on in the analysis of Betz (Galatians, 287–88) and the punctuation of Nestle (but not that of UBSGT). This threefold classification, however, while possibly of heuristic or homiletic value, is highly artificial and cannot be supported by anything in the text itself. Rather, if there is an emphasis in this list of nine items, it is probably to be seen in the first item, ἀγάπη ("love"), for that is where in a Greek structure one would expect to find anything being stressed. Furthermore, the reference to "love" recalls the opening exhortation of 5:13, "through love serve one another," suggesting, therefore, that all of the other virtues listed result in some manner from love. Perhaps also the last of the items in this list, that is, ἐγκράτεια ("self-control"), should be seen as being emphasized as well, for the final position in a Greek structure is also where one would expect to find anything being stressed. And "self-control," which became by the time of Paul a central virtue in Hellenistic ethics, certainly makes an important, positive contrast to the vices of "drunkenness" and "orgies" that conclude the catalogue of vv 19–21."

produce in us through the empowerment and leadership of the Holy Spirit.

How can we get this? The answer is clear from Paul's words: "And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (οἱ δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τὴν σάρκα ἐσταύρωσαν σὺν τοῖς παθήμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις). If we want to live like this, then we must die. We enter into a personal crucifixion with Christ as He died for us on the cross: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:19b-20). A faith commitment to Christ is the door into this Spirit filled and Spirit led life. Our faith begins the journey; our faith is key to the journey itself. Faith is simply, **Forsaking All I Trust Him**. We don't produce these fruits ourselves; we can't ever achieve this level of living through our own fleshly efforts. It all comes from God through His Spirit at work in our life.

Thus Paul's next point is quite logical. "If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit" (εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν). Actually the biblical text assumes that we as believers gain our spiritual life through the Holy Spirit. On the basis of that reality then the admonition comes to literally 'walk arm in arm' with the Holy Spirit much as a precision marching military regiment does. The Spirit has brought spiritual life to us in conversion. Now we are to be fully obedience to His leadership so that His fruitage can take shape in and through our lives.

Walking with the Spirit excludes self-centeredness and selfish actions. The last verse at first seems to turn another direction. In reality, the emphasis on walking with the Spirit introduces the third leg of the Christian freedom theme began in 5:1. And 5:25 is foundational to the emphasis in 5:25 - 6:10, where reaching out to others in uplifting ministry is the focus. Paul's point is that only under the leadership of the Holy Spirit can we turn loose of self and loose ourselves in service to others.

CONCLUSION

Wow! There's a battle going on! And it's down inside us -- you and me. The Holy Spirit has taken control of our lives as believers, but our old sinful fleshly nature doesn't like being dethroned. Every possible effort is made to defeat us and to neutralize the impact of the Spirit on God in our life. But the flesh was defeated by Christ at Calvary. So now it seeks to use even the leverage of God's holy Law to bog us down in religious legalism as Christians. That's its sure fire secret to defeating us and regaining control of our life.

But we don't have to listen to the flesh. God reigns in our hearts. The Spirit of Christ is the superior power. All we must do is say Yes to His leadership. And the fruits begin rolling in with abundance. Our life moves from chaos and frustration to love, joy, peace etc.

Say Yes to God today!

