

A Study on Galatians 5:16 – 6:10

We'll be studying this passage bit by bit, so first let's read it in its entirety –

Galatians 5:16-6:10

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For each one shall bear his own load. 6 Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.

7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Let's start with the first 2 verses—

Galatians 5:16-18

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are

contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Connecting it with Romans 7:18—

Romans 7:18

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.

The term “flesh” needs to be understood as something more than just our body of flesh and blood. We can’t say that “flesh” in itself is bad, because God first created Adam in a body of flesh and God Himself called it “good”. Rather, “flesh” is a term used to describe the sinful nature that dwells within us, that which is associated with our first birth, our natural birth. We were all born after the likeness of Adam, and with that, we are all born separated from God. Therefore, our “flesh” is tied to this world and to things that are not of God.

When a person becomes “born again” (receives the salvation of their spirit), the breath of God—His Spirit—breathes life into that person and creates in them a living spirit. Upon their new birth, Christians receive the indwelling Holy Spirit, which serves as a guide and a teacher.

John 16:13

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

So here is our choice—live by the Spirit (let Him guide us and teach us) or live by the flesh (let it guide us and teach us), for they both exist together within us.

Note what Paul says in Romans—

Romans 8:1, 5-8,12-13

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

12 Therefore, brethren, 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.

Living and dying *in this context* is not referring to the here and now, nor is it referring to eternity. It is referring to the age to come, the 7th day, the millennial kingdom.

Remember the passage from 1 Corinthians? Paul told the church at Corinth that he couldn't speak to them as spiritual men because they were acting fleshly. *He couldn't give them the meat of the word because of it.*

SO WE HAVE A CHOICE! Live by the flesh or live by the Spirit.

Again note something Paul said regarding living by the Spirit—

1 Thessalonians 5:19
Do not quench the Spirit.

Paul would not have warned against “quenching” the Spirit (which means “to extinguish, or put out”) it if it wasn't possible.

The good news is that we are not left to wonder what fleshly deeds look like and what spiritual deeds look like. We are told in the next few verses in Galatians...

Galatians 5:19-21
Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

“Those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God”. This is not talking about the loss of the free gift of salvation which all Christians currently possess. We cannot lose that. It is talking about the inheritance which is “reserved in heaven” for us—the potential for the Christian to rule and reign with Christ as a co-heir in the millennial kingdom. As Peter tells us—

1 Peter 1:3-4
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you...

Back to the Galatians passage. We need to note that although this is a thorough list of the “deeds of the flesh,” it is by no means a **complete list**.

Don’t think for a minute that you’re all right just because you don’t have any behaviors that fit into this nice little list. Notice the phrase “and things like these.” Notice how Paul puts it...immorality is just as dangerous as drunkenness, which is just as bad as outbursts of anger. There is no better or worse sin than another. ALL or ANY of these deeds will get one disinherited from God.

But NOTE: This passage is not talking about the sin itself. It is talking about the person who continues in their sin—knowingly and willingly and continually—and refuses to deal with it. This type of person is basically saying that God’s Word doesn’t apply to Him, nor does it matter. That person will not get the inheritance.

BUT WE DO NOT NEED TO WORRY OR BE CONSUMED BY GUILT OVER THIS. The grace and mercy of God has provided cleansing for His people—

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He [Jesus] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Back to Galatians...

Galatians 5:22-26

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

This word “fruit” should remind us of what Jesus said to the nation of Israel—

Matthew 21:43

[Jesus speaking to Israel] “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the **fruit** of it.”

This new nation is the church, the body of Christ, called out mainly among the Gentiles in order to receive what Israel forfeited...the kingdom of the heavens. Notice that Jesus says it will be given to those “producing the fruit of it”. o conversely, we are to understand that those who do not produce fruit WILL NOT receive it. This “fruit” is produced one way, and one way only.

John 12:24 –25

[Jesus speaking] “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. 25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal [literally, “age-lasting”] life.”

Our flesh—all that is part of this world, this body, our first birth—needs to die. We must kill it. We must “carry our cross”—crucify our flesh—if we are to see life in the age to come.

Back to Galatians...

Galatians 6:1

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

If a brother or sister in Christ is found sinning, the spiritual man (that person who is walking by the Spirit, and not the flesh) is to “restore” (which means to “mend” or “repair”) that person. And not with a spirit of superiority, but of gentleness, knowing that each one of us can easily get ourselves into the same situation. It is truly a blessing to have someone care enough about you, *and your inheritance in the age to come*, to correct you and guide you back onto the narrow path.

Back to Galatians...

Galatians 6:2-6

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For each one shall bear his own load. 6 Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches

Notice the command, “Bear one another’s burdens”. It is a command, not a suggestion. *We are in this race together*. “Bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ”. This is what Christ said about that...

Matthew 22:35-40

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" 37 Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor

as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

What we do with one another, how we handle one another, is part of the work (the fruit) that we are to produce. It is part of what we will be called into account for on the Day of Judgment.

Back to Galatians...

Galatians 6:7-10

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

"DO NOT BE DECEIVED." What is that referencing? The fact that some people mock God by thinking that God does not hold us accountable for our actions. Notice what Paul says in verse 8, "The one who sows to his own flesh shall...reap corruption." We already saw from the previous verses that Paul is talking to the brethren, the Christian. The "corruption" (literally, "destruction") is in that coming age, not now.

Here's the alternative to "destruction"—verse 8 "the one who sows to the Spirit (which means being led by the Spirit and acting according to the Spirit) shall...reap eternal (literally "age-lasting") life. The spiritual man—the man who does not quench the Spirit—will receive life in the age to come, which is the inheritance of the kingdom... ruling and reigning with Christ as a co-heir.

And we'll end with the positive action words from Paul, from the end of the passage we've just read...

Galatians 6:10

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

LET US DO GOOD TO ALL.

Especially to those who are of the household of faith.