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Galatians 5:13 - 6:18



Galatians - Steve Gregg

In this session, Steve Gregg analyzes Galatians 5:13 to 6:18, focusing on the theme of love as the fruit of the Spirit. He emphasizes the importance of personal responsibility and putting others first, rather than fulfilling one's own desires. Gregg also discusses the struggle between the flesh and the spirit, and the practical application of love in bearing one another's burdens and helping others in need. He concludes by highlighting the importance of being a new creation in Christ Jesus, rather than relying on external practices like circumcision or strict adherence to the law.

Transcript

Today we have our final session in the book of Galatians, and we pick up just about in the middle of chapter 5. So we will take the latter half of chapter 5, and then there's a somewhat short chapter in chapter 6, the shortest of the chapters in the book. There is, however, a great deal of weighty stuff in Galatians 5 and 6, and if anything, this may be the weightiest part, at least with reference to the practical side of the book. I did not announce when we got to chapter 5 that we began the practical application.

As we pointed out before, Paul often will lay out the theological propositions in the opening section, and then he'll make application in the latter section of the book. He does that here, too. In chapter 5, verse 1, he had begun the practical application with the words, Stand fast, therefore.

Now, therefore, of course, refers back to what has gone before and says, Because of that, because of those truths that have been brought out in chapters 3 and 4 especially, stand fast. That's what you're supposed to do about it. Stand fast in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again in the yoke of bondage.

He gets very strong and tells them that if they go so far as to embrace circumcision as a necessary thing for their righteousness, then they might as well embrace the whole of the law. In fact, they are tacitly doing just that. If they go ahead and be circumcised, then they are bringing themselves under bondage to the whole law, and that is not a circumstance that anybody should ever wish upon themselves.

It is a place of bondage. At the same time, not being under the law has sometimes, well, let's put it this way, many preachers are afraid that if they release their hearers from the obligation to keep the law, the result will be misbehavior. That if people are not controlled by laws, they will not be controlled at all.

Now, see, what Paul was saying earlier in chapter 4 is that before Christ came, the religious experience of mankind was like that of a child, kept under the control of governors and stewards and so forth, because, of course, they needed that, like children who are not able to control and guide their own lives. They needed external guidance. Man needed external guidance.

So did we until we came to Christ. But having come to Christ, he considers that like the transition from childhood to adulthood. It is the place of personal responsibility for one's own actions.

It comes at such a time when a development has taken place which imbues the person with self-control, with self-governance. And later on in this chapter 5, we'll read that the fruit of the Spirit is, among other things, self-control. Now, children do not have internal controls and therefore must be placed under external controls.

But the assumption Paul makes is that if a person is really a Christian, that person has made a transition to the place of having internal motivations, internal controls that guide that person in the right path without the imposition of outward laws. Now, he has said over in First Timothy, where we saw last time the law was not made for a righteous man. The law was made for lawbreakers, for evil people, for people who would go around and do wrong things.

But righteous people who won't do those things don't need the law. They're not under the law. And Paul expands on that in the chapters that we have before us in the close of Galatians.

We want to pick up at verse 13 because that's where we left off last time. In chapter 5, verse 13, Paul says, For you, brethren, have been called to liberty. That's what he said in the opening verse of the chapter.

Stand fast in the liberty. Okay, you've got liberty. The liberty, however, is not to be considered to be absolute.

There is no such thing as absolute liberty except in God. Only God is free to do whatever he wants to without there being any danger of him doing something wrong, because he's the only person who is all good. He's all holy.

In the universe, there is none other that can do everything that every whim of his, he can do. He's free without restraint, because whatever he does is good. Now, Christians want to do what is good, but of course, we have another aspect to our existence, and

that is our flesh.

And while we are free from the law and should not be entangled in it, he wants us to know, do not use your liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but rather, by love, serve one another. Earlier in this chapter, in verse 6, he said that what matters to God is a faith that works through love. Love is a fruit of the Spirit, as Paul will point out in verse 22 of this chapter, which we have not yet gotten to, but the operation of the Spirit in the life of the believer produces love.

Faith, if it is a saving faith, motivates one to love, produces works of love. And if by love you serve one another, you will be doing what you're supposed to do with your liberty. You will be not using liberty as an occasion to the flesh.

Now, your flesh is your natural person, who you are by nature in Adam. And although you have a new nature and have become partakers of the divine nature, and Paul will get into this conflict between the flesh and the Spirit before we get very much further in this chapter, he brings it up. But while we have, in fact, the Spirit within us, who is none other than God himself, and we have been given the divine nature, this has not eradicated from us the presence of an evil nature that we were born with, and the desires and cravings and demands of our natural person.

Now, our natural man is by nature, by inclination, self-centered. That is what makes us bad, is that we are self-centered. We live and we want others to live as if we were the center of the universe, as if our desires, our needs, our preferences really ought to be observed and deferred to by everybody else on the planet, including God.

And while very few people today are so crass as to say that that's their worldview, virtually everybody who is not a Christian, and unfortunately far too many Christians too, live as if that's their worldview. As soon as something doesn't go their way, they think they have grounds to complain, as if the world owed it to them to make things go their way, as if God has some explaining to do when he allows some suffering to come into our lives or something, because we didn't want that. And this just shows the natural corrupt bent of our nature, that we think for some reason things ought to go our way.

I don't know if we would pause to think why they should, what kind of answer we would give ourselves. It's just an assumption without examination, without criticism. We just make the assumption things ought to go my way.

And you might say, well, I don't make that assumption. I hope you don't. As a Christian, you shouldn't and you needn't.

But it is your nature from birth to think that way. And it is an attitude that needs to be unlearned. And you need to be reconditioned.

You need to undergo transformation and renewal of the mind. But there is always that

same tendency, that same temptation to put yourself first. And when you hear that you're not under law to think, oh, great, now I can do whatever I want to do.

Well, that depends. What do you want to do? Do you want to sin? You can't do that. Your liberty is not a liberty to sin.

Your liberty is to do what is right and enjoy it. Your liberty is to follow the higher desires that God has put in you and to do them with God's approval and blessing. Now, over in Ephesians chapter two, when Paul is describing the unregenerate person in Ephesians chapter two, Paul says in verse three, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves.

That is, among the sons of disobedience. We also used to be in that group. We used to conduct ourselves among them in the lusts of our flesh.

Now, less of the flesh, Paul said, don't use your liberty as an opportunity for the flesh. Well, we used to. We used to live in the lusts of our flesh.

We used to fulfill the desires of our flesh. And we did that. And it says we were then fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature children of wrath as others.

Now, what's interesting about that is that Paul says that while we were living in sin, living in the flesh, we were at the same time fulfilling the desires of our flesh and of our mind. Now, that is something that isn't true anymore. What isn't true? Do we still not have a flesh with evil desires? No, we still have that, but we also have changed our mind.

That's what repentance is, a change of mind. And therefore, having repented, we no longer approve of sin. Our mind wants to live a holy life.

Our flesh still has the same desires as before, but our mind no longer approves. In the world, when we sin, we fulfill the lusts of the flesh and of the mind. But today, the desires of my mind are not the same as they were then.

I've changed my mind. I've repented, and I desire to live holy before God. So that Paul speaks of this frustration that now exists and this struggle in Romans chapter seven, where he talks about with my mind, I approve the law of God, but I find in my members another law at work, making war with the law of my mind and bringing me into bondage to sin.

There's two wills now. But when I was a heathen, there was only one will. It was the will of my flesh and of my mind.

That is, my mind and my flesh were on the same team. They had the same desires. Now my mind has changed, but my flesh hasn't.

So my mind has different desires than it used to, but my flesh has the same old ones. And therefore, I'm engaged in a struggle. It is a warfare.

And we hear a lot these days about spiritual warfare, and certainly a lot of what we hear about spiritual warfare has to do with the fighting off the demonic powers and the territorial spirits and casting out demons and things, which are all very good. I mean, I guess they're all very good. Some of those things I'm not sure I know much about that the Bible doesn't speak about, but I do believe in the demonic.

I do believe that part of spiritual warfare has to do with dealing with the demonic. But before we get around to dealing with the demonic, we've got to deal with ourselves. We are the first enemy that we have to overcome.

And Paul says that, as we shall see in verse 17, but we're not there yet. In verse 13, he says, make sure that our liberty that we have is not interpreted as an opportunity for the flesh just to have its own selfish way, but rather overcome that tendency by serving one another with love. Love is the opposite of our nature.

Of course, people who are not Christians experience something that they call love, but I seriously doubt that they experience anything that is a wholly disinterested love. That is to say, a love that has no personal advantage in mind. Now you might say, well, no, I have loved before as a Christian.

I love somebody without any personal advantage in mind. Well, it's probably hard to know for sure if that's the case. Even a mother's love for her child.

How can we be certain that that's totally disinterested? I mean, after all, if somebody else's child dies, that mother doesn't go through, you know, my wife doesn't go through a trauma. If one of my children died, my wife would go through trauma. Why? Because she loves our child or is it because she loves herself? Well, of course she loves our children, but every mother and every father, every parent, every husband, every wife has a certain aspect in their love, in the natural, which is self-interested.

It hurts me when something bad happens to my children. It hurts me if I'm not loved by my children or my wife. It hurts me.

And therefore, I interpret this pained desire to have, you know, good relations with these people as my love for them. And indeed, I mean, as a Christian, it is possible for me to have genuine spiritual disinterested love for them. That's the fruit of the Spirit.

But a lot of people would say they have love who are not spiritual people. And if they would really look more critically at what they have, what they have is self-interest. And love is often just strong animal feelings or strong psychological, emotional attachment and dependency on somebody.

And they call that love. Love in the Bible is something that comes not from a position of need for somebody to love me back. It comes from a position of strength.

I am loved by God. I have received the love of God. I'm giving love even if the person I give to doesn't give me any back.

That's why Jesus said, as I have loved you, so you love one another. He didn't say you love one another the way another loves you. You love her the way she loves you.

You love him the way he loves you. He says, no, as I have loved you, you love them. You receive love from me in the back door and you give out that love to others out the front door.

And it is your love for them is not dependent on them loving you back because you have all that you need in that area through having received love from God. The fact that we have come to live in the love of God has fulfilled all that could ever be described as a need for love. I'm not sure.

I mean, there'd be a lot of people who would be concerned about the whole vocabulary of need because of what psychology has done with that terminology. But I dare say that the Bible would say that we're all in big trouble if we don't have the love of God. And therefore, I think we do have a need for love.

The problem is most people interpret it as a need for somebody to love them. Some other person love them. And they and we're often told that if you're not loved, that you can't love others.

You can't love others properly if you haven't received enough love. Well, that may be true if the love we're talking about receiving is the love of God. If you don't receive the love of God, then you can't love others.

The Bible says we love because he first loved us. The King James says we love him because he first loved us. The Alexander text simply says we love because he first loved us.

So because he has loved us, we can love others. We don't have to seek something from others. We don't have to try to use others to our own fleshly advantage.

And when you're not under the law that says you should not kill, you should not commit adultery, you should not steal, you should not bear false witness, one might say, well, then I can, if someone really irks me, I can kill them because I'm not under the law. If someone really attracts me, even if they're married to someone else, I can commit adultery with them because I'm not under the law. If somebody has something I'd like to have, I can steal it from them because I'm not under the law.

No, you can't. Not if you love them. You can't do any of those things if you love someone.

Paul and Jesus both said that the whole law is fulfilled in the command to love your neighbors yourself. And what Paul is saying is you have received freedom from the law, but you've come under another principle and you are only free from the law as long as you're walking in that principle. And that is the principle of love.

When you walk in love, you will not kill, commit adultery, steal or bear false witness against someone. But it will not because of any law, but because your heart would revolt at the thought of doing so. You love somebody, you don't want to hurt them.

Let me show you something over in Romans chapter 13, which Paul is talking about this same issue. Romans 13, beginning at verse 8, Romans 13, 8 through 10. Paul says, Oh, no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

For the commandments, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, you shall not covet. And if there's any other commandment are all summed up in this thing, namely, you shall love your neighbors yourself. Love does no harm to a neighbor.

Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law. Now, the person then who loves is free from the law only because they do by nature the things that the law requires. And you might say, Well, I know somebody who doesn't do by nature what the law requires, and they seem to be a loving person in many respects.

Well, to the extent that they don't do by nature what the moral law would require, they aren't loving because that's simply the definition of what love. I mean, the moral law is simply the description of what love looks like when it's behaved, when it is lived under. So Paul says, You're at liberty, but don't use that as an occasion or an excuse or an opportunity for the flesh.

But through love, serve one another. Your liberty is for you to be free to love other people and serve them. You know, I said, Well, that sounds like slavery.

That sounds like servitude. Yes, it is. But servitude is not slavery if it's what you choose and want to do.

I sometimes think that I don't work for a living, but I realize I do. I'm not on my own. I can't do just everything I want to do.

I'm obligated for these nine months to show up at certain times and teach a certain number of hours and to go to certain meetings, be on the radio certain nights and to go make certain trips and so forth, some of which are a little inconvenient. I mean, there are times when there's some things I'd rather do. But the fact is I'm doing what I really want

to do.

No one is making me be a Bible teacher. This is what I feel a call to be. But that call is interpreted in terms of the fact that I really desire it more than anything else in the world.

Now, yes, I work. Yes, I have obligation. You know, yes, I can't just sit around on my hands and hope for, you know, to be right in the sight of God.

But then I don't want to just sit around my hands. I mean, I don't want to do anything else than what I do. I am free.

I mean, I'm under obligation, but I'm free because the thing I have to do is what I want to do. That's freedom. You see, a man who is not a slave but desires to do things he can't do is not free.

The richest man in the world who wants to have somebody else's wife but can't is not free. But the slave who owns nothing and is obligated to serve his master 24 hours a day, but but loves his master and wants to do that. And that's the thing he most wants to do with his life.

That person, though he's a slave, he's free because he can do whatever he wants. And this is the relationship that we now have with God. It's not that God has us under the yoke of bondage to the law.

We are free to do whatever we want so long as what we want is motivated by the love of God and by the love of people. If we don't have that love, then we're not free. We're still under law, as Paul will go on to point out.

He says, For all the law, verse 14, is fulfilled in one word, even this. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. We just saw Paul say the same thing in more words than one in Romans 13, eight through nine.

This is, as I've said before, Galatians is sort of like a shorter version of Romans. Here we have in a single verse what Paul said in Romans 13, eight through ten, really. But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another.

Now, bite and devouring one another apparently has to do with attacking probably verbally more than anything else. I mean, I doubt if there were people actually biting with their teeth or even doing, inflicting any physical harm on another. In all likelihood, he's talking about verbal attacks, perhaps backbiting, as we would call it today, gossiping, putting people down.

We may find out that if we do that, they get consumed. Don't be surprised. You take enough bites, there's nothing left.

It's all consumed. I remember having this verse illustrated to me very graphically when I was in my teens. There was a young man in the circle of friends that I was with who was, I don't know, when you're with a certain group, with a group of people, there's usually one person more than others who is the easy brunt of jokes, either because they're good-natured and they take it well and everyone can get away with making jokes about them, and they just smile and they don't seem to be hurt by it.

So people just find it, you know, they assume the person doesn't mind it, so they vent their desire to appear clever in the eyes of the group at the expense of this one target, this one recipient. Maybe that's why it is, or maybe there's somebody who is intrinsically laughable. I mean, there are some people who just say stupid things accidentally all the time and makes it easy to make fun of them.

But whatever it is, there was a guy named Eddie in Orange County when I was a teenager, and he was just one of our friends, but he was one of those guys who, for one reason or another, everyone kind of made jokes about, to his face, not behind his back. I mean, it was like just good-natured. No one really meant him any harm.

Everyone really liked him, but it was just easy to make fun of him. And eventually he stopped hanging around, and then he started hanging around with the wrong crowd, and then he got back into drugs, and then he died of an overdose of heroin. And I felt like the Lord just quickened this scripture to me at that time.

If you bite into barwinner, beware, lest you be consumed of one another. You know, just picking at somebody, making fun of them, backbiting, gossiping about them. No harm is really meant.

It's just ventilating something of our corrupt nature on somebody who seems to take it well. But don't be surprised, after you've taken that many bites out of someone, that there's not anything left. They're consumed.

And that was what happened to Eddie. Very sad story. Actually, Eddie, before he was consumed, went to Germany with me, passed out about 20,000 tracks on the streets.

He memorized the Book of Proverbs. Before his conversion, he had used so much LSD that his mind was nearly gone. I mean, he was like, in high school, the classic burned-out, hippie, acid freak whose mind was totally fried.

And when he became a Christian, God just strengthened his mind, and he memorized almost the whole Book of Proverbs, and became very evangelistic. But there was just something about this person that made it easy to kind of make wisecracks about him. And as I say, he backslid and died of a heroin overdose.

Verse 16, I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Now, Paul said in Ephesians 2, where we read a moment ago in verse 3, that when we were

children of wrath by nature, we were living among the children of disobedience, fulfilling the lust of the flesh. Now, the lust of the flesh are elsewhere in Paul's writings called the deeds of the body, or the desires of the body.

I mean, the word flesh, we need to talk about the word flesh. I'm sure John, in talking about the Book of Romans, has dealt with the word flesh a little bit, maybe a lot, because it comes up a great deal in Romans as well. The word flesh, the Greek word is sarx, S-A-R-X, and it is a word that has a lot of flexibility.

It always means flesh. I mean, that's always the right translation of it, is the word flesh. But it has various meanings.

For instance, sometimes flesh can mean all of humanity. All flesh is as grass, the Bible says, meaning all people, all flesh. Sometimes flesh has to do with one's ancestry.

It says that Jesus was the son of David, according to the flesh. Or what should we say of Abraham, our father, according to the flesh? According to the flesh, in places like that, which are in Romans chapter 1 and Romans chapter 4, those cases I just quoted, flesh there speaks of ancestry, what I am by nature, what I am by descent. The word can mean a lot of things.

Among other things, it can mean the physical body. The physical body. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Now, some people would say the word flesh there doesn't mean the physical body, but it does. Jesus was commenting on the fact that the disciples simply couldn't stay awake. Their bodies were exhausted.

Their spirits were willing, but their flesh was weak. Their body. Now, there are terms when Paul uses the word flesh in a special sense, and many commentators would translate it sinful nature.

The word starts in some places. If you had the NIV, for example, you would find very probably in this very chapter some of the places we've already read, like verse 13. I imagine the NIV and many others would say, do not use your liberty as an opportunity for the sinful nature.

Because that's a very common translation, or I should say paraphrase, of the word sarx by many modern translators and theologians understand Paul to mean the sinful nature. Now, realize that there's nothing in the form of the word sarx, in one case, that gives us a clue. Well, this form of the word sarx means body.

This means humanity. This means sinful nature. It's always the same word, always in the same form.

The question of what it means in a given case is determined by context, and that is sometimes a hard call to make. There are a lot of times when translators would translate sarx as sinful nature. When I look at the same passage, it would give the impression that body would be a perfectly good translation, just talking about our bodies.

For instance, when he talks about the lusts of our flesh, but you do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Many modern translations would render the lusts or the desires of the sinful nature. However, lusts of the flesh, if we meant flesh and body, that makes reasonably good sense, too.

Although we have to understand that the body's desires are tainted by self-interest, we have to realize that the desires of the body are not wrong in themselves, but they are wrong if they are your Lord, if they are the thing that governs your life. Peter said in 1 Peter 1, verse 14, that we as obedient children should not be fashioning ourselves according to the former lusts in our ignorance, our fleshly lusts. We fashioned our lives according to our lusts before, 1 Peter 1.14. Our lives were fashioned according to our desires.

Today our lives would be fashioned according to the desires of God, the Spirit's desires. And our fleshly desires and our spirit desires are not the same, even if we are talking about our legitimate physical desires, some of which are granular. If your muscles ache and you've been working hard for twenty hours and you fall asleep, the desire for sleep is a desire of the flesh.

It's not evil in itself, it's physical. It's not moral in itself. The sexual desire, for food, when you haven't eaten for a while, these hungers are physical, they're granular, they're built in.

God made you with the capacity to have those desires. That was before the fall. Man got hungry, I presume, before the fall.

That's why God gave him fruit. I presume that sexual desire was inherent in Adam and Eve before the fall as well, unless God expected them to be enjoying it all. And certainly the Bible doesn't give us that impression at all.

The body has desires which we often associate with our struggle. Our struggle is with the glands, with the desires of our bodies, appetites and so forth. And yet those desires are not in themselves evil.

Here's the problem. The body is not capable, without the soul and the spirit, the body is not capable of discerning between the right and the wrong use of drives. If my body experiences hunger because I haven't eaten, there is a right and a wrong use of that hunger.

That hunger can motivate me to eat legitimately the right amount of food, the right kind

of healthful food, the food that I legitimately own and am entitled to eat. And that's a good thing to do. That's what hunger is there for.

But the same hunger can lead me to want to steal somebody else's food or eat food that is not good for me or eat too much food, more than I need and to be a poor steward of my health or whatever. And this would be a wrong response to hunger. Hunger, in either case, is the same physical phenomenon.

It's my spirit, my body, my principles, my convictions that determine how that desire will be and how it will not be fulfilled. Now, it's quite clear when the Bible says do not commit adultery, that sexual desire can become a force at war against your spirit, because your spirit says, OK, I will not vent my desires just every time they want to be vented. There are perimeters within which I will allow and outside of which I will not allow sexual desire to be exercised.

That is a spiritual decision that I made. My body is not capable of making that decision. All it knows is it has a drive.

It is my spirit that determines how that drive will be governed. And that drive, therefore, works against, at times, the spirit's desire for me, because the drive may be attracted to something very wrong, an act that would be impossible for me to approve of. And so my spirit is warring against that fleshly drive.

Now, to call that fleshly drive sinful nature might be correct. And the translators who render it that way, maybe it's justified. Maybe they're justified in doing so.

But I would hate for people to think that sexual drive or hunger for food or desire for sleep or for water, that these are evil desires in themselves. These are desires God created. But what is evil is the unrestrained following of these lusts, allowing our former, as in the former times of our egos, fashioning our lives according to these desires.

If I fashioned my life according to my desire, I'd become obese. I'd be a womanizer. I'd be a sluggard, because I would not govern my appetite for food, sex or sleep according to godly principles.

But I am to govern my life by other principles, those of the spirit, which Paul is going to lay out for me here. And if the flesh and all of its wishes are retained and unchecked, then we will be continually fulfilling the lust of the flesh. But he said this will not happen in verse 16 if we walk in the spirit.

Now, Christians often have the frustration of which Paul speaks in Romans, chapter seven and in Galatians 5, 17, where he says, For the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. That means the desires of your body, and we could even say their sinful nature, if some theologians prefer to say it that way, are often toward things that your spirit can never approve or that the Holy Spirit can never approve. And you

have spiritual desires because you're a spiritual person, but you're also physical desires because you're a physical person.

And these desires are contrary to one another. It's that simple. At times they are.

Now, some fulfillment of your desire for food is not unspiritual. And physical desires can be governed by the spirit and be perfectly sanctified. Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed is undefiled, it says in Hebrews 13.

The bed in marriage is undefiled, but the bed outside marriage is defiled. However, the bed is the same bed and the act is the same act. As far as the body is concerned, what's different is who's governing, who's making the decision about the act.

Is the body going to make the decisions or the spirit? Well, both want to. And the Christian is committed to walking in the spirit, that is, submitting to the desires of the spirit rather than in the flesh, submitting to the desires of the flesh. Paul talks about this frustration in verse 17.

The flesh lusts against the spirit, the spirit against the flesh. These are contrary to one another so that you do not do the things that you wish. Now, this is as as verse 14 was a passage in Romans reduced to a single verse.

So also verse 17 is a passage in Romans reduced to a single verse. That passage in Romans, and I'm sure you know, is Romans chapter seven, verses 14 to the end of that chapter. And there, Paul says, I don't understand what I'm doing.

I desire this, but I don't do it. I determined not to do that. I do that.

I do the things I hate and the things I approve. I don't do what's going on here. And his answer is, well, he says in verse 21 of Romans seven, I find then a law that evil is present with me.

The one who wills to do good for I delight in the law of God, according to the inward man, as all Christians certainly do. But verse 23, I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind. That is what Paul says in Galatians 5:17.

You've got the lust of the flesh. You've got the lust or the desires of the spirit. These are contrary to one another.

There's a war between the principles my members live by or want to live by and those that my mind approves, which is my delight in the law of God. Now, what is the solution? Look at Romans eight, verse four, Romans eight, verse four. The solution, Paul gives there is that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.

That is, we would live according to the righteous standards of the law puts forward. The righteous requirements law are fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh, but

according to the spirit, walking according to the spirit causes us to not fulfill the lust of the flesh and to fulfill the righteous requirements of the law. In Romans eight, verse two, Paul says, for the law of the spirit of life in Christ, Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

So the law or the power and principle of the spiritual life that God gives in the Holy Spirit is superior to the law and the principle and the rule of sin and death in my life. And as I walk in the spirit, I do not fulfill the lust of the flesh. There is a war that goes on, and that war has often prevented me from doing what I want to do.

I want to do the right thing, but I sometimes don't. Why? Well, simply this. I don't walk in the spirit all the time.

If I did, it's a given. It's a guarantee you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. This and one other very important verse provide the biblical solution to the sin problems that the Christian church has turned to psychology to try to find the answer to and other and other gimmicks.

This verse and also John eight and verses 31 and 32, right about there, where Jesus said, If you continue my words, you are my disciples indeed, and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free. And he went on to explain that that freedom of which he spoke was freedom from sin. He said, Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.

So there's two things that guarantee you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. You'll be free from sin. One is that you continue in Jesus words, which means you'll be a disciple indeed, and you'll know the truth and the truth will make you free.

The other is that you walk in the spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. When people tell me they have life dominating problems, whether it be alcohol or pornography or gambling or anger, anxiety, you name it. These things are works of the flesh.

And if you walk in the spirit, you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. And if you say, But I'm in bondage. Well, you shall know the truth and the truth make you free from that bondage.

You will not be in bondage if you continue in Jesus words. And if you walk in the spirit, the words of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit are the resources God has given in the very fact that Christians not only turn but are encouraged by Christian authors and radio personalities to turn to therapy, to strange procedures of inner healing and things like that, which are not taught in scripture, but which are taught in the world, by the way, by non Christians, that Christians are turning to the world for answers because they have these very problems. Anxiety, anger, addictions, as they would call them and so forth, proves that Christians have lost touch with what the distinctive Christian teaching is about victory in your life.

It is this. Continue in Jesus words and the truth will make you free and walk in the spirit. You won't fulfill the lust of the flesh.

If you are fulfilling the lust of the flesh, you're not walking in the spirit at that moment. But walking, as I think I've pointed out on previous occasions, is an activity that breaks down into specific increments, each one of which has to be executed successfully in order for the walk to continue. And those increments, of course, are steps.

If you are to get over to that doorway to go to the bathroom after the class is over, of course, you wouldn't do it during class, but when class is over, then that will require that you take a certain number of steps from the place you are to the place you hope to get. If each step is taken successfully, you will have walked there successfully. However, if you take 10 steps successfully and twist your ankle on the 11th step and fall flat on your face, then your walk has been interrupted.

You can still get up and start taking good steps again and make it, but your success in transporting yourself by foot where you want to go is dependent on a continuous set of successful steps, and that you may take a great number of them successfully does not guarantee that you will not take the next one unsuccessfully. Now, walking in the Spirit is broken into such increments. Each decision I make, each temptation I face, each challenge that confronts me can be met either in the flesh or in the Spirit.

If the Holy Spirit is looked to, if I am filled with the Spirit, trusting in the Spirit, led by the Spirit, enabled by the Spirit, given over to the mind of the Spirit, then that step will be taken in the Spirit. If I take two steps in the Spirit, I'm walking in the Spirit. If I take 10, 20, 50, 100, I'm walking more in the Spirit.

But there's always a possibility that when I face another challenge, and this is what the devil, of course, is so fond of, is trying to find some time when your guard is down, when you haven't been falling, and where you think that maybe falling is a thing of the past, that's when he catches you at a vulnerable moment and trips you up. And that's what he wants to do, is to trip you up. And then, of course, he tells you, you see, you're no better than you ever were.

You're no Christian. You just were fooling yourself, and so forth. Where, in fact, you were a Christian, and you still are, but you're also still a sinner, saved by grace, but a sinner who needs every moment to walk in the Spirit, because it is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ that makes us free, moment by moment, from the law of sin and death.

It doesn't happen...it's not that God comes and eradicates your sin nature once and for all, and you're just in the Spirit from then on. It's a walk. Every step is an individual undertaking, and that continues until the day we die.

Now, he says in verse 8, but if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now,

what does he mean by that? We have to read the rest of the paragraph before we understand how he means that. If you're led by the Spirit, you're not under the law.

So we'll see what he says. He says, Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness. All of these are more or less sexually oriented kind of problems.

Then he goes on to things that are not. Idolatry, sorcery. By the way, the word sorcery in the Greek, as you may have heard, is pharmakia, a word very closely related...it is the root of our word for pharmacy or pharmaceutical.

It has to do with the use of drugs. Now, I don't believe that all drugs are wrong. Some drugs are strictly medicinal, and even if...as far as that goes, to distinguish between an herb and a drug would be almost impossible to do.

There'd be a fine line, you know. I mean, one's a natural cure, and the other is something made from a natural thing that's no longer quite in its natural state. But the fact of the matter is, not all use of medications would come under the ban.

But rather, most agree, most scholars agree, that pharmakia refers to the use of consciousness-altering drugs, many times associated with involvement in the occult, in going into trances and things like that. Now, today, consciousness-altering drugs are very, very common, both what we call street drugs, and also what would go under the euphemism of medications. And by medications, I say it's a euphemism.

Euphemism means a nice way of saying something, which could be said more bluntly in a less flattering way. To call many of these drugs medications is to over-exaggerate their legitimacy. To apply a disinfectant to a wound is to apply a medication, because you are meeting a physical need from a physical injury and so forth.

That's a medication. But much of what is given in the way of what is sometimes called medications, especially those that are given out by the psychiatric community and doctors acting under their instruction, are not medications at all in that sense. They don't really cure anything.

There's not really a sickness in the first place. There's no sickness, therefore there's nothing to cure. There is misbehavior, and that's something that has to be changed.

But the misbehavior, generally speaking, I'm not aware of anyone who's gone to a doctor and got medications for a behavior that was not in itself sinful behavior. The behavior that is sought to be corrected is sinful. And the cure for sin is holiness.

And holiness is not gotten through a pill. Holiness is gotten by walking in the spirit. And pharmakia, I don't know, I must confess, I don't know to what extent the modern pharmaceutical, mental health, psychotropic drug industry is playing on this pharmakia.

But I will say this, they come mighty close to it, because they're not really medicines for a disease. They are something that alters a person's mood. And it was their consciousness altering.

Now, when people smoke marijuana, that's consciousness altering. That changes the mood also. When people drink alcohol, that changes their mood.

When people smoke a cigar, I just heard Rush Limbaugh say the other day, it's a euphoric experience. For everyone else in the room, it's a gagging experience. But I guess for the smoker, it's euphoric.

Now, these are drugs, see? And usually Christians do not approve of taking drugs to alter the mood, at least didn't used to. Especially if those drugs are bought from a pusher in an alley. But if they're bought from a pharmacist with a doctor's prescription, somehow that gives them legitimacy in the eyes of Christians, even though there's not really much difference.

The Ritalin that is given to children who are diagnosed with ADD is actually chemically almost indistinguishable from cocaine. It's a form of speed. Ritalin is speed.

And if you would buy the same drug on the street without a prescription, you'd probably go to jail for it, and you'd be considered to be a criminal. And judged by Christians, you'd be a sinner. But if the doctor gives it to you, or to your child, then that's okay.

Even though your child may become addicted for life to the stuff, if it gets the kind of behavior you want out of your child, then that's considered to be okay and justifiable. I'm not sure why that is. But the point is, Pharmakeia is what is here listed as one of the works of the flesh.

I'd like you to read on and see what Paul says about all these works of the flesh after we get through the list. But he's listing these works of the flesh. He says in verse 20, "...idolatry, pharmakeia, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies..." Now, heresies here, we usually think of heresies as false doctrine.

The Greek word for heresies usually means divisiveness. It may well be divisiveness over false doctrine. You know, a false doctrine coming to divide the church away from true doctrine.

But heresy has as its root meaning divisiveness. "...envy, murders, drunkenness..." Another form of consciousness altering drugs, drunkenness. "...revelries..." I must confess, I haven't looked up the Greek word for revelries.

I'm not sure precisely what it means. In English, my assumption is it has to do with partying all the time. I think revelries has to do with carnal entertainment in what we call

partying today.

What else we got here? We've got envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like. He doesn't give a comprehensive list. Let's just give a few samples of the type of stuff we're talking about here and say, and everything like that.

The like. And notice what he says now. "...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." Now, some of you might get scared real quick here because you say, there's some things in that list that I have done.

In fact, there's some things on that list that I've done since I got saved. But Paul says those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Am I doomed to hell because I've done these things? Well, practicing those things, I think, has to be defined here.

The Christian, even Paul himself said he does things he hates. And he even said earlier in this place in verse 17, you don't do the things that you wish. What you wish to do is serve God.

Sometimes you don't do that. Sometimes you fall into the flesh and do things that are the works of the flesh. A burst of anger, for example.

Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Have you ever had a burst of anger since your conversion? Some of you I'm sure haven't, but some I'm sure have. Now, does that mean you're not saved? No, you're not practicing that.

A Christian doesn't practice that. An unbeliever does because he walks in the flesh, and these are the works of the flesh. A Christian falls into works of the flesh from time to time, but does not practice them.

And when he falls, he knows he's fallen. He doesn't feel like one who's just walking down a garden path. He feels like he's fallen off a wall, off a high road, down into a ditch.

I mean, he feels like he's way where he doesn't belong, and he's injured and feels bad. That is how a Christian reacts to these things. And though a Christian may sometimes do these things, I shouldn't say may, because that sounds like permission.

I don't give Christians permission. The Bible gives no such permission. But though it may occur, it sometimes does occur, I should say, that Christians have been known to do such things, that doesn't relegate them automatically to the category of those who will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Now look over at 1 Corinthians chapter 6, because there's a very, very similar statement from Paul to

another church there, along the same lines. 1 Corinthians chapter 6, beginning at the ninth verse, Paul says, Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Same expression we found about those who do the works of the flesh, those who practice these things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Same thing here. Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers. So far all those things are on the list also in Galatians.

Then he says, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites. Those are not on the list in Galatians, so we're adding to the list but remember in Galatians and the like, things like that. So he didn't list everything.

He's listed a few more things. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. So he says these people, like he said in Galatians, will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But look what he says of the Christians in verse 11, and such were some of you. But you made it through the 12-step program successfully and you're no longer a sex addict, an alcoholic. No, he doesn't say that.

He says you were these things, but he doesn't speak of them as therapeutic problems needing therapeutic cures. He says you were washed because you were filthy in your sin. You were sanctified.

God made you holy, set you apart, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. The Christians in Corinth, some of them have been sodomites, and homosexuals, and adulterers, and drunkards, and revilers, and extortioners. Now people like that don't inherit the kingdom of God, but these ones did, because although they had been that, they were washed.

Now there's a difference between one who practices these things and one who is washed from them. Now were there no more sins in the Corinthian church now that they've been washed? No, the Corinthian church is about the most sinfully compromised church that Paul wrote a letter to as far as we know. There's lots of sins in the church, some of which are the ones that Paul decries in Galatians as works of the flesh, contentions and divisions and so forth, as well as immorality and selfish ambitions.

Those things are listed in Galatians as works of the flesh, that those who do these things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But that means only unless you are washed and sanctified and justified by the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God. Paul does not assume that the works of the flesh will never be found among Christians, but they will not be practiced by the Christian.

The Christian is practicing a different lifestyle than this, and if he practices these things,

it's a demonstration that he is not a Christian, or he's not saved. He will not inherit the kingdom of God, Paul says. You can tell by someone's moral behavior and their attitude toward their moral behavior whether they're saved or not, or at least you can tell that they're not.

I'm not sure you can always tell that they are. Sometimes people have moral behavior, but they're still not saved. But if somebody is practicing these things, it's given to us in the Scripture.

They will not inherit the kingdom of God. They're not a Christian. Okay, looking now at verse 22, Galatians 5. But the fruit of the Spirit... Now this is in contrast with verse 19, the works of the flesh.

You've got the flesh and the Spirit. In verse 17, he said the flesh lusts against the Spirit. They're contrary to each other.

In verse 16, he said if you walk in the Spirit, you won't fulfill the lust of the flesh. So we've found out what the flesh does when he is obeyed. When the flesh is governing, the things listed there are the things that are in the line.

But the fruit of the Spirit... Now the word fruit there speaks of that which is produced quite naturally. Not works of the flesh, it's not works of the Spirit that you through the Spirit do these works. It's rather the Spirit produces fruit, like a tree produces fruit.

It's not so much an effort that the tree puts out to do so, it's in its nature. Because of the kind of life an apple tree has in it, it produces apples. You can tell what kind of a tree it is by its fruit.

Jesus said that about false prophets. You will know them by their fruit. A tree is always known by its fruit.

A spiritual person will be known by the fruit of the Spirit in their life. What kind of fruit? Well, love, joy, peace. The King James and the New King James say long-suffering.

That's a little bit unfortunate, although the word was a good one in 1611 for that concept. We just don't have that in modern English anymore. The word long-suffering, or I should say more probably the Greek word behind this, means what we normally mean by the word patient.

Long-suffering just means patience, what we mean by patience. Now to make matters a little more confusing, the King James version also uses the word patient in some places. We find the word long-suffering and the word patient, both of them used with frequency in the King James and the New King James.

And here's where we have to give our minds a little bit of a correction here, because

when the King James or New King James uses the word long-suffering, it's translating a Greek word that we would translate as patience. But when the King James or the New King James uses the word patience, it is translating a Greek word that we would more properly translate endurance or perseverance. When you find the word patience in the King James and the New King James, the Greek word there actually means something like endurance or continuance or perseverance.

And when the King James or the New King James want to express what we mean by patience, they use the word long-suffering. This is just reflecting an older English than that in which we live. You need to make a mental note about that.

So, whenever you run into the word long-suffering, just read patience. When you read the word patience in these versions, read endurance, because that's what those Greek words really mean. I'm really quite surprised that the New King James didn't alter that in their translation, because they did try to avoid using obsolete words.

That was the whole point of writing the New King James. I'm surprised they left long-suffering in there. I don't mind the word, but it just doesn't communicate to modern readers what the concept was.

Patience. What we call patience is what he's here describing as a fruit of the Spirit. Kindness.

Goodness. Goodness certainly seems generic. It doesn't seem as specific as some of these others, but it's specific enough.

A person who is walking in the Spirit won't do bad things. They'll do good things. If someone's doing bad things, you can be sure they're not walking in the Spirit, because that's not the fruit of the Spirit.

Faithfulness. Gentleness. The word gentleness is also the same Greek word that is sometimes translated meekness.

In the King James version, it is almost always translated meekness. The New King James has, most of the time, translated, I think, gentleness, although it sometimes retains meekness as an English translation of it. That's true, by the way, of the NIV and other modern translations, too.

There's only one Greek word that occurs in every case when you find the word gentleness or meekness in your Bible. It's the same Greek word. I think the King James uniformly translated it meekness, but you'll find inconsistency in the modern translations.

Sometimes they translate the word meekness sometimes as gentleness. Self-control. And then this last line in verse 23, Against such there is no law.

Now, that explains what he meant way back in verse 18. If you're led by the Spirit, you're not under the law. How does he mean that? Well, when you are led by the Spirit, what will you be doing? Things that are loving.

Things that are kind. Things that are self-controlled. Things that are patient.

Things that are good. There's no law against such things. So, if you're led by the Spirit, you'll be doing things that there is no law against.

Therefore, you're not under the law. The law can't touch you. If I, by nature, am a cautious driver, and I don't need the road signs to tell me what the speed limit is, I can sort of instinctively sense that 35 miles an hour is the fastest safe speed that can be done on this road.

It may be that the sign also says 35 miles an hour. But because I, by my own wisdom, drive the speed that is safe, and it happens to agree with what the authorities require unsafe drivers to reduce their speed to, I am not under the law, although I'm doing the thing the law requires. If I drive 35 just because I realize that's a wise speed to drive on this road, and it happens that the law requires people to drive at that speed, I am doing what the law requires.

But I'm not under the law. The law can't touch me because, by nature, I'm doing what the law is given to enforce on people who don't do it by nature. If you are led by the Spirit, you don't require the law to make you do the right thing.

You're not under law. The law doesn't have to have any relation to you whatsoever. It can't touch you because you're already living well within its bounds.

If you walk in the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, gentleness, and these things. And against these, there's no law. So if you do what the Spirit leads you to do, you'll be doing that which no one can fault you for.

Even God's law cannot fault you for it because you'll be doing what God's law was given to restrain human behavior to do. But we don't need the restraint of law when we have the Spirit restraining us and guiding us. So if you, as he says in verse 18, if you're led by the Spirit, you're not under the law.

Now, if you are not led by the Spirit, then the law has to restrain you from the works of the flesh, adultery, murders, blasphemies, and all that stuff. If you walk in the Spirit, you're not going to be committing adultery or murder or blasphemy, and therefore, you don't need any law because there's self-control. There's the internal law written on your heart, governing, and you do by nature the things that are written in the law.

Now, verse 24, And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Now, it's not clear exactly what Paul means by having crucified the flesh. We

can deduce it, but I don't think he ever uses that expression elsewhere.

I think it's the only place in the whole Bible that speaks of crucifying the flesh. Now, there's a similar expression that comes up later in chapter 6, but it's not identical, and that's in verse 14. Chapter 6, verse 14, Paul says, But God forbid that I should glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus, by whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.

Now, there's a lot of crucifying being talked about here. There's crucifying the flesh. There's being crucified to the world and having the world crucified to you, and all of this is probably just unpacking the general statement Paul made back in Galatians 2, verse 20, where he said, I have been crucified with Christ.

Back in Galatians 2, 20, he said, I have been crucified with Christ. Well, what in the world does that mean, crucified with Christ? I died with Christ. I was nailed to the cross of Christ.

Christ is my representative. To put it another way, Paul kind of, I think, explains his meaning over in 2 Corinthians 5, verse 14, 2 Corinthians 5, 14. Paul says, For the love of Christ constrains us, because we judge thus, this is what we figure, that if one died for all, then all died.

Now, what's Paul thinking there? If one died for all, all died. What do you mean by that? What he means is, if all deserve to die, but one died as their substitute, then they've all died. Their death sentence has been carried out.

It's as good as if they've all died, because he died in their place. They had to die. The waitress is sentenced to death.

Everyone has to die. But if he died for them, then they died in him. They died in the person of their substitute, the representative who stood in and did it for them.

They vicariously died in him. Do you know what the word vicarious means? Have we ever talked about that? I guess it's not a word that a lot of people know. Well, do you know that it's possible for, before you go to bed tonight, for you to go to Africa and go on a safari and hunt rhinoceros, or go out and watch lions frolicking with their mother and cheetahs hunting down gazelles in Africa? Do you know you can do that? You can't get there by bedtime physically, but you can go get a video from the Library of National Geographic, and you can vicariously have this experience.

You don't really go, but a cameraman went there for you. He paid for the plane ticket. He went over there.

He withstood the mosquitoes and the biting flies, and he got all the pictures, and you can enjoy his trip without making it yourself. You go on that safari vicariously through him.

He did it for you, and vicariously that somebody did it instead of you, but you get the benefit for it.

Now, to say that I have vicariously died, or Jesus vicariously died for me, means that Jesus died, and I get the benefit as if I had died. What benefit is there in that? Much in every way. If you deserve to die for your sins, it's kind of good to have it over with.

Better than looking forward to it. If you die in your sins, it will not be a pretty thing on the Day of Judgment, but if I can look back on a previous event and say, hey, I died back then. I don't have to look forward to that anymore.

I died for my sins already in him. He died for me vicariously. I have died.

If he died for all, then all died. Now, when Paul says in Galatians, I have been crucified with Christ, he's saying the same thing. I have died.

Now, over here in Galatians 5 and in 6, where he talks about being crucified to the world. The world is crucified to me, and we crucify the flesh. These are terms that Paul uses only once in all of his writing.

Because he uses them only once, we don't have a broad base of references to compare with one another to understand exactly how he means that. We can only guess, but we can make an educated guess. When he says in verse 24 of chapter 5, those who are Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

The word crucified doesn't mean died. To be crucified, all one needs to do is be nailed onto a cross. They eventually die there.

But a person has been crucified as soon as they've been nailed to the cross. In other words, the word crucified does not imply necessarily that death has occurred. You can have been crucified and still be alive.

Jesus was crucified and alive on the cross for six hours, and the thieves a little longer. Sometimes people were on the cross for three days before they died, but they were crucified the moment they were nailed. They died at some time.

To say that the Christian has crucified his flesh, Paul's thinking in terms of our association with Christ and his death. If we allow that Jesus died for us, and that the sins of our flesh and of our natural man and so forth were all laid on him, and we were in him, dying in him, there's a sense in which it's appropriate for us to see ourselves as nailed to the cross. In another sense, we're no longer nailed to the cross.

We've risen with him, too. So Paul doesn't always stick to the metaphor quite the same way. The idea, though, is that what got nailed to the cross, at least in our reckoning, should be understood to be the old life.

We have a new life through the resurrection. The old life got nailed and has never been set free from that. My flesh, my bodily appetites that used to govern me, they've all been crucified.

Now they're all hanging on the cross. They've all been nailed. Now you might say, well, mine seem very active and very alive.

Well, that can very much be the case. Suppose, for example, that you were an actual slave of another man and you had been accustomed to doing everything he said, just jumping as soon as he said, go get that. You ran and got it.

I mean, it was just you were a slave. You had a mentality of a slave. He's your owner.

He's your master. But then he did something, some capital crime, and the law caught up in the Romans caught up and they crucified him. And there you stand, the slave of this man at the foot of the cross, looking at your master nailed to the cross, and he's still screaming orders to you.

And because you're so used to obeying his orders, you run off and do everything he says, even though he's now a condemned criminal. He has no power nor right to enforce his will any longer. The only thing he has a right to do now is die.

And a slave who continues to carry out his master's orders in such a case may seem loyal and dutiful, but it's just plain stupid, especially if those orders are not to his advantage. When the flesh, when your old life, your old patterns are calling out orders for you to do, and you've always obeyed them before, but you realize, now wait, in Christ, this flesh has been crucified. It's nailed to the cross.

It may still be shouting. It may still be giving orders and commanding, but it has no right, no authority. That flesh has been crucified, and I have no business being its slave anymore.

I'm a free man. I don't have to do that anymore. But what Paul put it another way, I wonder if I could find it real quickly.

It's over in Romans six. I may have the wrong passage, but that's what I thought it was. It may be that I'm thinking of something in chapter eight where Paul says the same thing another way.

Okay, 8:12. Thank you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

For if you live according to the flesh, you'll die. But if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. Now, this probably comes as close to Paul saying the same thing as we've crucified the flesh.

You put to death the deeds of the body through the spirit. Through the enabling that the Holy Spirit gives, you put to death your bodies or your flesh's former deeds. You don't live according to it anymore.

It's put to death. It's on the cross. It's crucified.

We're not debtors to it anymore. You owe it nothing. What did it ever do for you? And so that, I think, is probably the concept Paul has in mind when he says those who are Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Let's move along now through Galatians five a little more quickly and into six. If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit. I always found verse 25 to be difficult until I read it in other translations.

The majority of other translations translated, if we live by the spirit, let us walk in the spirit or by the spirit. The word in there, I don't know if it's a difference in text or if it's just a difference in the way the same Greek word can be translated, but the New American Standard, I believe the NIV, the Revised Standard, and most of the more modern translations translated, if we live by the spirit or if we live through the spirit, let us then walk in or by the spirit. The idea being this, that Paul has established that we don't have eternal life on the basis of law or works.

It's on the basis of having the spirit. The Holy Spirit is our life. He has come and given us life.

Our whole life is in the realm of the spirit as Christians, then it's only obvious that our walk should be by the spirit. If our very life and being is indebted to the spirit, then how much more is it obvious that we must perform our duties and live our lives and walk the walk through the power of that spirit, whom we look to even for our life itself. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Now, there's three parts to that verse. All of them are obvious. I don't know that they need any explanation.

Let us not become conceited. That's easy enough to understand. Let us not be provoking one another, goading someone to anger.

By the way, the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 13, love is not provoked. We are not supposed to provoke others, and if others try to provoke us, we should not be provoked. It says that in 1 Corinthians 13, love is not provoked.

But even though love is not provoked, some people don't love, and they are provoked. They are easily offended or made angry, and it is our place to avoid provoking them if we can, or envying them. I'm not sure why Paul lists these particular items, conceit, provocation, and envy, together in this single sentence.

It may have something specifically to do with things the Galatians were doing that Paul knew about that we don't, but that's a good stand-alone verse anyway. All three of those things are things that Christians need to watch out for. Chapter 6, Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, King James 1. Now, if somebody is overcome in a trespass, it's not something to gossip about, nor something to ignore.

It is something to correct. The person needs to be restored, it says. Go and restore such a one.

Now, those who are told to restore such a one are those who are spiritual. You who are spiritual, restore such a one. Now, you might say, well, I guess it's not my job because I'm not spiritual.

It is your job to be spiritual. You are under obligation to be spiritual. All it takes to be spiritual is to walk in the Spirit.

This is the birthright of every Christian. There's no reason in the world why you shouldn't be spiritual. And if you are spiritual, if you are in a spiritual frame of mind, then you can go in the spirit of gentleness, which is a fruit of the Spirit.

Gentleness is one of the fruits of the Spirit. So, because you are spiritual, because you are walking in the Spirit, you can bring the appropriate meekness and gentleness to this confrontation. Many people are very put off by being confronted, but if you have the sufficient degree of gentleness and meekness, it goes a long way toward winning them over, where you would fail to do so if you were a little more condemning or harsh.

And obviously, spiritual people are not going to be condemning and harsh when they're trying to restore such a one. And why should you be so gentle about it? Well, you should consider yourself, lest you also be tempted. This means either that you recognize that you yourself are capable of falling into whatever the same trespass is you're trying to correct someone else about.

You have to be aware of the danger of having a beam in your eye when you're trying to pull a moat out of someone else's eye. You can be tempted too. When you go to them, don't go in a self-righteous, sanctimonious attitude, like you're so much better.

You could be tempted with that or some other temptation. In fact, you might be tempted into a wrong spirit while talking to them. Consider your own self.

Watch your own spirit. Avoid being tempted yourself and realize that you can be tempted and keep humble about it when you go to correct somebody else. Now, what we have here in chapter six, and actually beginning back in the last verse of the previous chapter, is a series of miscellaneous exhortations.

Paul's winding down. He's probably running out of scroll space, and he realizes there's a whole bunch more to say. Instead of giving long treatises on stuff, he just gives short exhortations.

He does this at the end of 1 Thessalonians also, as you know, because you're studying 1 Thessalonians. At the end of 1 Thessalonians chapter five, there's just boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, miscellaneous exhortations that don't all have something closely related to each other, but they're just things that have to be said. If Paul had probably twice as large a scroll, he probably would have written whole paragraphs on each, but he realized he's running out of space and better say it all in a short space.

That's what's happening here. He gives lots of different instructions, not all of them directly related to each other, but all related to what the Galatians need to know, some of them given very briefly and with a staccato sort of rapid fire manner. Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.

For if anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another. For each one shall bear his own load.

Now the King James version says everyone shall bear his own burden and makes it sound like it contradicts verse two. Everyone will bear one another's burdens. But the translation and different words here in the New King James, burden in verse two and load in verse five, reflects the actual difference in the are not the same word, even though in the King James, both places translated burden, different Greek words here.

What he's saying is that we can bear each other's burdens if by burdens we mean struggles, challenges. When people have financial burdens or they're going through crisis, whatever to give them a shoulder to lean on, to give them some support and counsel, to give them some practical assistance is one way to bear their burden with them, help carry one end of that load with them. This will be fulfilling the law of Christ, which is that you love one another.

In other words, love is very practical. It has to do with helping people. If someone is burdened, help them.

There's a young widow in town here that we've become aware of, a friend of ours actually, whose husband died of cancer just earlier this year, totally unexpectedly. He was in his late 30s, I think, maybe 40. He was found to be sick, died suddenly, left two little boys, two and four years old, I think, or something like that.

He was building them another house on some property, but he didn't get a chance to complete it. The house they're living in is a dilapidated old thing with all kinds of problems. We've become aware of some of those problems, and so we're going to be

having some work through these people go over and do some things for her.

To my mind, that's just what it means to bear someone's burden. She's got a big burden. She's been burdened more than any of us have at the moment, probably.

I mean, she's widowed. She's got problems. It's wintertime.

Her house is leaky and all this kind of stuff. To go over and actually do something about it, not just say, oh, the poor thing, I'm very sympathetic, or even just praying for her. Not that praying is a little thing.

If we could do nothing more, then prayer is something we can do. But to help bear a person's burden, by practically assisting, is how you fulfill the law of Christ. You don't impress Jesus by long prayers and much church attendance and much ritualistic tithing and so forth, but by actually making sacrifices, putting out effort and resources to help people in the real struggles they're facing.

That's what it means to bear one another's burden, and that's what Christ has commanded us to do. In doing so, you fulfill the law of Christ. Now, in verse 3, he says, if anyone thinks himself to be something when he's nothing, he deceives himself.

Well, he assumes that people are nothing. By the way, Paul said that he himself was nothing, over in 2 Corinthians chapter 12 and verse 11. 2 Corinthians 12, 11.

Paul says, I have become a fool in boasting. You have compelled me, for I ought to have been commended by you. For in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing.

I'm not any worse than the other apostles, but I'm nothing. They're nothing, too. Everyone's nothing.

These days, if you say, I'm nothing, someone's going to try to correct you and say, you've got low self-esteem. You've got to get that fixed. But Paul said he was nothing, and Paul said that anyone who thinks he's something, when in fact he's nothing, is deceiving himself.

And he's not going to get anywhere that way. It's not deceit that sets you free. It's the truth that sets you free.

You might as well admit it. You're nothing. Let each one examine his own work, then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, not in another.

What he means by that is not that you rejoice in yourself as opposed to Christ, but that you rejoice in what you are doing with reference to what you're supposed to do, rather than with reference to what someone else is doing. You don't compare yourself against others. You say, hey, I feel pretty good about myself.

I'm doing so many great things, and that person's doing so few. No, just look at your own work. Don't look at other people's work.

Don't use someone else's work as a measure to decide if you're doing well or not. What does God want you to do? You'll have to bear your own load of responsibility. Everyone has to bear his own load in that respect.

Verse 6, Let him who is taught in the word share in all good things with him who teaches. Now this, frankly, talks about giving. Some people understand the word share to relate.

I want to share something with you. It means to relate something to you. That, however, is a modern use of the word share.

The Greek word used here means to help, to give something. It is probably assumed that those who teach in the early Church were probably the elders of the Church. And these were mostly, I think, supported by gifts from those who taught.

By the way, nowhere says it, but him who teaches charged for his teaching. The teacher is never encouraged or even allowed to ask for money. But those who are taught are charged to give it anyway.

It's voluntary, and the teacher should not ever demand it. But those who are taught should realize that they are receiving spiritual benefit and that could legitimately cost them something in terms of helping out the ones from whom they receive that benefit. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked.

For whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to the flesh will of the flesh reap corruption. But he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

And let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially those who are of a household of faith. Sowing and reaping here, there's two ways that it could be seen.

I mean, there are other times when Paul talks about sowing and reaping where he's talking about giving. And since he has just said in verse 6 about the need to share with the one who teaches, he might be talking about giving here too. Sow your goods.

When you sow your money, sow it to projects that are good, spiritual things, to promote spiritual ends, rather than promoting secular ends or fleshly ends merely. And you will see a spiritual harvest as a result of sowing that way. Paul tells the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians, I think it's 8 or 9, when he's asking them to give to the needs of the church in Jerusalem, he says, if you sow bountifully, you'll reap bountifully, meaning if you give a lot of money, you'll get a lot back.

So Paul might here be continuing to talk about the giving aspect, and he says, if you sow

to the spirit, you'll reap of the spirit. If you sow to the flesh, you'll reap of the flesh. Do you spend your money on things in the flesh, or do you spend your money on things that promote the gospel and things of the spirit? However, it may be more generic.

He may not be talking about money at all here. He may be talking about just life decisions, the way you spend your time, what you think about, what you invest your energy and so forth through. Whatever you do, you are sowing to some harvest.

There will be repercussions of your thoughts, actions and speech, and those repercussions are like the harvest of the sowing of the words and the deeds that you do now. And he does say, as we have opportunity, verse 10, let us do good to all. He may be saying that's sowing to the spirit, doing good things, doing good to people.

He says, especially in verse 9, let us not grow weary in doing good for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. If we keep doing good things, eventually there will be a harvest seen from it. Verse 11, see with what large letters I've written to you with my own hand, as many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh.

These try to compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ, for not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. That is, they can prove that you're on their side, makes them feel better that they have converts. A lot of people want you to join their church.

It makes them feel better, makes their church. They feel like they're in the better church if there's more people there. So also the circumcision party, the more converts they get to their way, makes them feel better.

Your flesh being circumcised makes them glory that they're on the winning side. It's like a big competition between Paul and them. But God forbid that I should glory.

They're glorying in you, but I'm not glorying in you. I don't glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. Probably what this means is the world has rejected me and I've rejected the world.

Being crucified is the ultimate state of being rejected, being condemned. As far as the cross of Christ is concerned, I see it, I interpret it as crucifying the world. It condemns the world.

It is the rejection of the world to me. And I am rejected by the world. The world crucifies me and I crucify it through the cross of Christ.

My devotion to the cross of Christ makes me repugnant to the world and it repugnant to me. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything but a new creation. Being born again, being regenerated, that's what avails.

That verse starts the same way that chapter five, verse six starts. In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision or uncircumcision avails anything but faith working through love. And now the verse starts the same way, but instead of faith working through love, he says, but a new creation.

By the way, in another place, in 1 Corinthians 7, 9, Paul says, for in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision or uncircumcision avails anything but keeping the commandments of God. So there's three verses in Paul's writing. That was 1 Corinthians 7, 9. They start with the same word, so they all end differently.

It's not circumcision or uncircumcision. It's faith that works through love. It's keeping the commandments of God.

It's a new creation. That's what makes the difference, not physical circumcision. Verse 16, And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

Apparently Israel of God is referenced to the church. He's already said earlier in chapter three that we are the children of Abraham spiritually, if we are Christ's. I guess that makes us the Israel of God.

From now on, let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. He's referring to his scars from the persecution he suffered for the gospel. I still have the marks from when I was stoned in Lystra, he's saying.

Now, don't give me any additional trouble. I can show you how much trouble I've already borne without you adding to it. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Amen. So we come to the end of Galatians. By the way, that closing remark is very typical of Paul's.

Almost all of the closing words of the epistles wish grace of the Lord Jesus Christ on the readers. Here he specifies on your spirit, but I'm not sure if there's a deep significance of specifying with your spirit. The point is, may you be spiritually blessed with the grace of Christ.

And this would make you, unnecessary for you to get involved in legalism and the law.