



## 8) The Warfare of the Spirit (Gal 5:16-24)

### Section 2: Christian Growth Handout

There is a war within the heart of every believer. The indwelling Holy Spirit battles against the sinful desires of our flesh in order to aid us in turning away from sin and in walking rightly in the good and trustworthy commandments of God. In so doing, we are able to enjoy freedom from sin, new life, and the fruit of His Spirit.

#### A) Living and Walking by the Spirit (Gal 5:16-17, 24-25)

***“16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please (Gal 5:16-17)***

##### 1. What is the warfare of the Spirit?

- Opponents: Flesh vs. Spirit (5:17)
- Purpose: To aid us when we are tempted to follow sinful desires instead of the good will of God (5:17)
- Consequence: A life continuously transformed by the Spirit which pleases the Lord and is good for us too!

##### 2. Live by the Spirit

***“24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. (Gal 5:24-25)***

- “Live” suggests our state of living by the Spirit: born again believers (“those who belong to Christ Jesus, who have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires”) by nature are in fact living by the Spirit.
- A believer’s reality is one characterized by the Spirit’s activity within: leading, sanctifying, warfare and more!

##### 3. Walk by the Spirit

- “Walk” in contrast to “live” is not definitive but something we should do, something we are desired to do: it speaks to conscious decisions to obey God by the power of the Holy Spirit that we must continually make.
- External component: Obedience to the commandments and will of God.
- Internal component: Need the continual transformation of the Spirit to help us grow in our faith and obedience.
- Misconceptions about walking by the Spirit:
  - Not equivalent to the elimination of sinful desire but is the *rejection* of sinful desire.
  - Not only about external obedience (e.g. Confucianism or other legalistic religions/schools of thought).
    - When we try to obey by our willpower, we completely miss the reality of our life in the Spirit and never truly address the underlying reasons for our disobedience and don’t grow.
- Embrace our life in the Spirit by walking by the Spirit:
  - There is no middle road in our actions and hearts: we are either with or against the Spirit.

- We must choose to side *with the Spirit* in battle and rely on His transforming power to help us identify and to overcome underlying reasons for sin so that we can live out our freedom from sin (Rom 6:22) and enjoy abundant life.
- **Summary:** Because we are alive in the Spirit, we must walk by the Spirit by praying for the Holy Spirit to help us subdue the underlying root causes of our external sin, so that we may walk with God in obedience and enjoy the new life He has given us.

## B) The Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:19-23)

**“19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Gal 5:19-23).**

- “Deeds of the flesh” are outcomes of the flesh, the sinful nature of man.
- “Fruit of the Spirit”, in stark contrast to the flesh, has immeasurably wonderful outcomes described as fruits. Name an opposite of each fruit below.
  - love \_\_\_\_\_
  - joy \_\_\_\_\_
  - peace \_\_\_\_\_
  - patience \_\_\_\_\_
  - kindness \_\_\_\_\_
  - goodness \_\_\_\_\_
  - faithfulness \_\_\_\_\_
  - gentleness \_\_\_\_\_
  - self-control \_\_\_\_\_
- As fruit, the Spirit of God is powerfully able to produce these much desired qualities in our life.

**Summary:** When the Spirit of God influences our lives, we are not told to look for money or comfort but qualities that characterized Jesus Christ. We certainly should aspire to bear all of these good fruits.

### Final Summary:

- The Holy Spirit from the inception of our new lives is set on working so close to our lives that our lives in their deepest places are shaped and formed to be more like Christ. The more the Holy Spirit affects us, the more this holy fruit characterizes our lives. This is the reason God’s people can look forward to living in harmony.

### Discussion Questions:

- Describe living by the Spirit. Do you feel that life in the Spirit is your reality? Please explain.
- Describe walking by the Spirit. Is the Spirit of God intimately involved in your spiritual walk? Please explain.
- Share one aspect of the “Fruit of the Spirit” that you feel God is calling you to work on in the coming year.