

## FOLLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT OR THE DESIRES OF THE FLESH?

**Galatians 5:13-16**

**(Not entirely original with me)**

**Introduction:** Christians have a wonderful freedom in Jesus Christ, such as freedom from sin, from the Law of Moses, from the traditions of people but they must not allow all those freedoms to cause them to think that they can "get away with anything." Christians need to be careful that normal, human desires don't bring about a degree of self-destruction. Christians are encouraged to learn how to "walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh as they used to."

### **I. THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH ARE OPPOSITES - Galatians 5:17**

1. The Spirit and the flesh fight for a Christian's attention:
  - They are totally opposite to each other - Galatians 5:17a
  - The "Spirit" is the Holy Spirit.
    - Through the Spirit one waits for righteousness - Galatians 5:5
    - *"...If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the spirit"* - Galatians 5:25
  - The flesh pulls the Christian in one direction while the Spirit of God pulls in the other direction.
2. The Christian must/will serve one or the other - either the Spirit or the Flesh:
  - To follow the desires of the flesh, one cannot do the will of the Spirit - Galatians 5:17b
  - Following the flesh enslaves a person - Romans 7:14-23
  - Only the work/help of the Spirit can overcome the flesh - Romans 8:12-14

### **II. ONE IS NOT UNDER THE LAW IF LED BY THE SPIRIT - Galatians 5:18**

1. What is it to be "under the law?"
  - The "law" refers to the "Law of Moses" - Galatians 4:21
  - The purpose of the Law is:
    - to reveal sin - Galatians 3:19a; Romans 3:10
    - to condemn the sinner as being guilty - Romans 3:19
  - To be "under the Law" is to be under a state of condemnation.
    - The "Law" has no provision for forgiveness.
    - The "Law" only condemns.
2. Those walking in the Spirit are not under the condemnation of the Law because:
  - Obedience to the Gospel results in freedom:
    - freedom from condemnation - Romans 8:1
    - freedom from the law of sin of death - Romans 8:2; 6:17-18
      - which is made possible through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ - Romans 8:3-4
  - Those walking in the Spirit do things against which there is NO law to condemn them - Galatians 5:22-23

### **III. ONE WHO FOLLOWS THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH WILL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD - Galatians 5:19-21**

1. The Kingdom of God is the Heavenly Kingdom:
  - Spoken of by Jesus - Matthew 25:34
  - Looked forward to by Paul and the others - 2 Timothy 4:18
  - Mentioned by Peter - 2 Peter 1:10-11

2. Paul made strong emphasis about the heavenly kingdom:
  - He gave a double warning:
  - *"...of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past..."* Galatians 5:21
  - He wanted to be sure the Galatians didn't miss the heavenly kingdom.
3. Those who follow after the lust of the flesh:
  - will have no inheritance in the kingdom of God - Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:5
  - will receive the wrath of God - Ephesians 5:6-7

#### **IV. CHRISTIANS HAVE IN A SENSE CRUCIFIED THE FLESH AND ITS LUSTS - Galatians 5:24**

1. Believing in Jesus Christ, they died to self and were crucified with Jesus Christ.
  - The "old man" of the Christian was crucified with Jesus that he/she would no longer be slaves of sin - Romans 6:1-6
  - Christians died with Jesus that they might be free from sin and live a new life with Him and without sin - Romans 6:7-10
2. Christians are to continue to "crucify self" (re-crucify daily)
  - They are to be involved in the daily process of "putting off" the old "man." - Colossians 3:8-11
  - If one fails to crucify self, then there is no hope - Romans 8:13
3. Putting off the works of the flesh is fundamental to the Christian life which started when one believed in Jesus and is to be continued as one grows in the Lord.

#### **V. AS THE CHRISTIAN IS TO LIVE IN THE SPIRIT, SO SHOULD HE/SHE ALSO WALK IN THE SPIRIT - Galatians 5:25**

1. Christian owe their spiritual lives to the Holy Spirit:
  - It was the Holy Spirit who first got their attention to the Gospel
    - Jesus said the Holy Spirit would do just that - John 16:7-13
    - The Apostles attributed the Gospel message to the Holy Spirit - 1 Corinthians 2:9-13
  - When a person responds to the Gospel, he/she is renewed by the Holy Spirit - Titus 3:5
  - It is the Holy Spirit who gives the believer new life - Romans 8:11-13
2. If the Christian lives in the Spirit, then shall he/she not walk in the Spirit?
  - The Holy Spirit is the One who gives the believer new life.
  - It is only right and proper that one should therefore live out his/her new life by:
    - being led by the Spirit - Galatians 5:18; Romans 8:14
    - walking in the Spirit - Galatians 5:25; Romans 8:1-2

#### **CONCLUSION:**

1. The Flesh or the Spirit, which one do YOU serve?
2. Christians are to live by and walk in the Holy Spirit, not serving the desires of the body/flesh.
3. To not live and walk in the Spirit is to live and walk after the flesh and to one day receive God's wrath.
4. The Kingdom of God is only for those who live and walk by the Holy Spirit