

## Galatians 5:16-25 Bible Study

1. What sort of actions do people excuse as just being part of “human nature”?

2. **Read Galatians 5:16-18.** Read 2:20. There “body” is literally “flesh”, the same word translated as “sinful nature” here in 5:16 & 17. What is Paul telling us about life now “in the flesh”?

*We've been rescued from our fallen state, but the desires of that state remain a present reality, always ready to draw us into sinful behaviour. There are now two natures in “conflict” – and this is the normal experience of the Christian who is alive by the Spirit.*

3. v16 is literally, “walk by the Spirit, and you will not complete the desire of the flesh”. What is the desire (note it is *singular*, not NIV “desires”) of the flesh? Why does ‘walking by the Spirit’ counteract this?

*There is one desire – to be God! Therefore to ruin our relationship with God. Walking by the Spirit is to **put into practice** the implications of being alive in the Spirit (to be explained below). Good habits empowered by God's Spirit, physically and practically lived out, leave no room for old and bad habits of the heart.*

4. **Read Galatians 5:19-21.** Why does Paul even have to make the list? Why not just say v19a then to v21b?

*Clearly these things were real and current actions going on in Galatia – perhaps before they were converted, and most likely currently going on in the church but some how excused – see vv13-16.*

5. How do you respond to each act on this list? Is this just a warning that *others* need to hear, or do you think this applies to *you* also?

*Once we think such things could **never** happen to us, we are prime targets for the temptations to do them.*

6. **Read Galatians 5:22-25.** Do the marks of the Spirit's (one) fruit have things in common? Why was this fruit so needed in the Galatian churches?

*They are intensely personal, other-person-centred, coming from within and having an impact especially within relationships.*

7. A non-Christian can display some of the characteristics on the list of the fruit of the Spirit. How is that different to having the fruit of the Spirit? What is the motivation for a non-Christian doing good things?

*People can naturally have a character trait like gentleness or patience. But they won't display a trait they are not naturally biased towards. The way the fruit works in the life of a believer, is taking what is not naturally there and giving them the ability to display it. The non-Christian's motivation is for self glory, not God's glory. They do these things so people might like them, praise them, or feel good about themselves.*

8. In v17 Paul indicates that internal spiritual “conflict” will be a normal thing in the Christian's life. What is there in vv22-25 that encourage us in this struggle (and keep us from despairing)?

*We've **crucified** the flesh – past tense – ie when Jesus died and we were united with him at conversion. The Spirit bears the fruit, not us. It's one fruit, not pick & choose! And we are **ALIVE** by the Spirit – we do, in reality, **live by the Spirit** and that is our motivation and our enabling power to keep walking by the Spirit.*