

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

THERE IS AN OLD STORY -

THAT ONE EVENING, AN ELDERLY CHEROKEE BRAVE TOLD HIS GRANDSON ABOUT A BATTLE THAT GOES ON INSIDE ALL PEOPLE.

HE SAID "MY SON, THE BATTLE IS BETWEEN TWO 'WOLVES' INSIDE US ALL. ONE IS EVIL.

THAT EVIL WOLF - IT IS ANGER, ENVY, JEALOUSY, SORROW, REGRET, GREED, ARROGANCE, SELF-PITY, GUILT, RESENTMENT, INFERIORITY, LIES, FALSE PRIDE, SUPERIORITY, AND EGO.

BUT THE OTHER WOLF IS GOOD.

IT IS JOY, PEACE LOVE, HOPE SERENITY, HUMILITY, KINDNESS, BENEVOLENCE, EMPATHY, GENEROSITY, TRUTH, COMPASSION AND FAITH."

AND ULTIMATELY ONE OF THE WOLVES IS GOING TO DESTROY THE OTHER THE GRANDSON THOUGHT ABOUT IT FOR A MINUTE AND THEN ASKED HIS GRANDFATHER: "BUT WHICH WOLF WINS GRANDPA?..."

THE OLD CHEROKEE SIMPLY REPLIED,  
"THE ONE THAT YOU FEED, SON"

As believers, we don't have two wolves fighting inside us – but there is the constant battle between the flesh and the spirit.

The battle is between what I want (the flesh – as I try to satisfy my own desires) and what God wants for me (spirit).

And depending on which one I feed, which one I nurture – that is the one that is going to win.

It is like tending a flower garden, we water the flowers, we fertilize the flowers and we pull the weeds out so that they don't overtake the flowers – unfortunately, we tend to pull the flowers and water the weeds.

This morning, we continue our study through the book of Galatians – a letter written to the church in the Galatia region because they had started to drift from the gospel of grace and started to embrace legalism.

And one of the things that we saw last week was that Paul started detailing the application portion of his letter.

These are the things that the churches in Galatia had to start applying in their lives (and our lives as well) – to stop biting each other and devouring each other (flesh) and instead choose to serve one another through love.

But when we consider it, we must wonder to ourselves how can we do that?

Where do we get the strength to love when it's not natural within us to do that and to not fight when that is the thing that we really want to do?

We don't always have the strength to prevail in such circumstances. No, we don't, but someone else does, and every believer in Jesus Christ has Him, and that is the Holy Spirit.

That will be the message to the churches in Galatia as well as us.

**LET'S PRAY...**

**[Gal 5:16-26 NKJV] 16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told [you] in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering,**

**kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.**

In 1991, at the age of 18 – I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior.

My boss had been sharing with me the gospel and he made arrangements for me to speak to one of the pastors at his church.

And the Lord had been tugging at my heart for a while that when I met the pastor – it didn't take long before I was in tears realizing that I needed a savior.

I get into my car thinking that all my problems are gone.

No more struggles. Everything that I had been going through – it's over.

I pull out of the intersection and this guy cuts me off and makes an obscene gesture toward me.

Naturally, I lowered my window and screamed something back at him, well; I actually waited a little bit because he looked bigger than I was.

However, it was at that moment when I realized that I still experience the same things as when I walked into the office.

All the prideful thoughts are still there

All the lustful thoughts are still there

And the reason that they are still there is because we still have to reside in these bodies.

We still have our sinful nature.

But one day, we will receive glorified bodies where we will not have to deal with sin.

But what do we do until then...

**[Gal 5:16 NKJV] 16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.**

As Paul had been making his case that our justification comes by faith alone, one of the questions he had to answer was, “If we don’t keep the law, then what will guide our conduct?”

The Judaizers were telling the churches in Galatia that if they didn’t abide in the law – they would start doing whatever they wanted.

**There were two choices in their eyes – abide by the law or lawlessness.**

Paul’s argument to the churches – there is another choice.

And because I started with an illustration about wolves, I am going to use another one involving dogs –

When I take my dogs out a walk, I always make sure that they are attached to a leash. And while we are on our walk and we encounter another dog or a jogger – the one thing that my dogs tend to do, is pull.

My response is to jerk them back into line and put them back on the path we were on.

This is what law does – it puts restrictions on those that kept the law.

They are bound by rules and regulations.

They were like a dog that was bound by the leash.

There are other dog owners who don't put a leash on their dogs and allow their dogs to roam around the neighborhood on their own.

Every morning when I drive up Nogales Highway on my way to work – there are dogs all over the place. These dogs get into other people's trash, they get into fights with other dogs, they get hit by cars or they end up getting picked up by animal control.

These are lawless dogs – this is what the Judaizers were warning would happen if the churches in Galatia abandoned the law.

But there is another group –

This is a dog that comes out of his house **with his owner without a leash.**

This dog goes about freely, but returns at his master's command.

This dog is bound by the love of his master.

This is the person who walks by the Spirit.

He or she obeys out of love.

That's the position of the believer in Jesus Christ.

We don't need a leash to guide us because we are being guided by the Holy Spirit.

So Paul says to these believers in Galatian, walk with Him (Holy Spirit).

The word that is used here for walk, means to progress, to live

Walking is nothing more than taking a step, then another, then another, and so on.

Taking steps involves making decisions and making choices.

Go on with Him wherever he goes. Be under his control and guidance and the promise is "As we do, we will not carry out the desire of the flesh."

This is the real key to gaining victory over our old sin nature, learning to take each step under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The second portion of verse 16, where Paul says that you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh – that is not a command.

It is a result of what happens when you walk in the Spirit.

We need to stop putting our focus on the flesh, and start focusing on the things of the Spirit.

We need to feed that Spirit-influenced part in each of us.

How do we "feed the Spirit"?

Prayer

Worship

Bible Study

Fellowship

Witnessing

Now, Paul is not saying that as believers, we will not have any desires of the flesh or lusts of the flesh –

We do, but the Holy Spirit makes victory over the flesh and all of those desires possible only to the degree that we walk by Him.

**[Gal 5:17 NKJV] 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.**

Here in verse 17, we have that inner conflict that is within all of us.



They are in complete opposition to one another and they are locked in a constant struggle.

There's one side that trying to break lose and disobey God as much as it can.

And there's another side that's trying to pull us back into doing the things that please God.

Paul himself had to deal with this struggle.

Turn with me to Romans 7,

Paul describes here the struggle between the willing and the doing and the failure to achieve what is good.

**[Rom 7:17-20 NKJV] 17 But now, [it is] no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but [how] to perform what is good I do not find. 19 For the good that I will [to do], I do not do; but the evil I will not [to do], that I practice. 20 Now if I do what I will not [to do], it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.**

**[Gal 5:18 NKJV] 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.**

The Law of Moses was never given in an effort to produce righteousness in man.

The Law of Moses was given to show us that we have no righteousness.

That we need a Savior.

And we have no righteousness because the Law never had the power to produce righteousness and it is helpless against the flesh.

But every believer in Jesus Christ has the Holy Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit who directs us and empowers us, as we side with Him, we can overcome the flesh.

And how does the Holy Spirit guide us – Primarily through the reading and hearing of the word of God.

Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

Through the word of God, through scripture, He enlightens us about the goodness of God and the wickedness of sin.

In that way He creates within us a desire to oppose in-dwelling sin, and gives us the power to oppose that sin, to react against it, and enables us to do that gladly, enabling us to do that joyfully in obedience to God's commands.

Our natural tendencies is to be hostile towards God – but the sense and the desire to walk in obedience can only come from the Holy Spirit.

You see the choices we make and the way we live indicates whether we are being led by the spirit or being led by the flesh.

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

As Paul is writing this, he can picture many in the churches in Galatia saying the following, “Paul – you have been repeating the word flesh, time and time again in the letter – what is the flesh?”

And Paul responds with saying that the works of the flesh are obvious by the things that people do.

And he provides a short list as an example.

Paul even categorizes them for the Galatians –

The first four are sexual sins.

The next two are religious sins.

Paul then lists 8 more – these are “people sins” – how we deal with one another.

God cares about our sexual and moral purity, and He cares about the purity of our religion and worship. **But He also passionately cares about how we treat one another.**

The fact that Paul uses more words to describe these interpersonal sins shows how important our treatment of each other is to God.

The last two are social sins – drunkenness and partying in excess.

There is a debate within the church – **can a Christian drink alcohol.**

And those that choose to drink alcohol will say that the scriptures never tell the believer they are not supposed to drink.

However, the scriptures do forbid drunkenness over and over again.

I had you make a note that Paul says, **and the like** – meaning that this is not exhaustive – it is not complete. It is only an example of a few.

Just because we may have a work of the flesh that is not on this list – it doesn't mean that it is ok.

Now, let's look at the last portion of verse 21 again.

**just as I also told [you] in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

This is a warning to those in the Galatia region – Paul had already warned them about this and now he is reminding them of that.

And what Paul is saying here is -

To walk in these works of the flesh is to be in plain rebellion against God, and those in plain rebellion against God **will not** inherit the kingdom of God.

Now, Paul isn't saying that if we do one of these things once that we lose your eternal life!

But if, on the other hand, if these kinds of things are a way of life for you, and there's no progress at all, then you better start worrying about whether or not you have come to know Jesus at all.

**[Gal 5:22-23 NKJV] 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.**

I don't think that it is an accident that Paul addresses one of them as works and the other one as fruit.

Remember, he is addressing those that wanted to turn to works.

Fruit is produced naturally, slowly, through growth.

I have a grape vine in our backyard.

The grape vine does not maintain a list of "things to do in order to produce fruit".

All it does is just grow.

It does not go to workshops to learn the five easy steps to producing fruit. It just grows.

And the byproduct of walking in the Spirit is fruit.

Paul describes it here in the singular.

It's not fruits, plural, but fruit, singular, which stresses that all nine of these virtues are a unity.

In fact, we might think of them as a cluster of grapes rather than separate pieces of fruit. They all go together.

So all of them, not just some of them, are to be found in the Christian.

If one is missing, then we do not have the fruit of the Spirit.

The first that is listed is love, and we would expect that, because God is love, 1 John 4:8.

Love is the greatest of the virtues; Paul tells us that in 1 Corinthians 13. Love fulfills the whole Law, as he has just instructed us in the previous passage.

I like what Luther wrote about the fruit of the Spirit is love –

*It is fitting that love be the first mentioned, because it encompasses all of the following.*

*It may even be said that the following eight terms are just describing what love in action looks like. "It would have been enough to mention only the single fruit of love, for love embraces all the fruits of the Spirit."*

**Joy**

It's been said that joy is the virtue in the Christian life corresponding to happiness in the secular world.

There's a big difference between the two.

Joy is reliable; happiness is not.

Happiness is dependent on the circumstances.

Joy is dependent on the Lord, who is above the circumstances and controls them for our good.

In fact, that's the reason that we can have joy in the midst of affliction, because we know that God is sovereign.

He rules over every aspect of life.

He is King over this world and over our lives at every moment of our existence, so everything that comes into our life is, Paul tells us in Romans 8:28, is for our good.

We may not understand it. It may puzzle us greatly, but we can rejoice in the midst of it, because by faith we know that the God who has allowed these things into our life, He's using them for our good.

And again we have joy because of what Christ has done for us and what He has obtained for us.

We must remember that whatever pains or losses we have in this world, they're only temporary.

They won't last. Heaven is real and eternal and it will be our possession in a short time.

After these are patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

All of these are fruit. And fruit, as you know, has seeds.

So fruit begets more fruit.

And the fruit of the Spirit does that. Love begets more love. Joy begets more joy and so on. It reproduces itself. It is living. It grows naturally and increases as we live under the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

And as a person walks in the Spirit – and we allow the Holy Spirit to do His work in our life, we no longer have to abide by the law because the law has already been fulfilled.

1. The legal requirements of taking care of our sins has been met by Jesus dying on the cross in our place.

2. The living standards of the Law are automatically worked out in our lives because the Spirit does not work contrary to the Law.

Those that choose to adhere to the law – only produce works of the flesh which is contrary to the law.



But when one chooses to stop focusing in the law and allow the Holy Spirit to fill us and control us, we end up meeting the very requirements of the Law.

I pray that we may all learn to trust the Lord.

That we may follow the Spirit's lead.

That we may Walk by Him and He will give us guidance and we will live well, and it will be confirmed that we are children of God and heirs of the kingdom of God.

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

