“Spirit-Led, Holy Living”

Galatians 5:18 – 6:10

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Introduction:

In bringing to a conclusion our study in Galatians, this lesson picks up where last week’s left off. While last week’s lesson discussed the freedom we have in Christ, it also discusses the responsibility of each individual believer in the use of that freedom. Paul taught us of the war that goes on between the flesh and the Spirit with the caution to mind the things of the Spirit.

In today’s lesson, he further explains how the two operate and that it is the fruit of the Spirit a Christian, be them Jew or Gentile, should be producing in their lives. What we produce in our lives speaks more of who or what dwells in us; who we are really being led by than the words that come out of our
mouths. After all, it was Jesus Christ Himself who originally taught, “For the tree is known by his fruit,” (Matthew 12:33). An apple tree is not an apple tree if it does not produce apples. A Christian who is not producing a holy life is not Spirit-led.

*Galatians 5:18* “But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.”

The law was under the old covenant. The law was the past way to control oneself and try to be an upstanding citizen in God’s community. The law was not able to do what Christ did permanently inside the life of each believer, “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,” (Romans 10:4).

Through the infilling of the Spirit, a Christian is led from the inside out of how to live this life in a holy manner which is pleasing in the eyes of God. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God,” (Romans 8:14).

*Galatians 5:19-21* “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”
In his instruction regarding the separation of the “works of the flesh” and what the Spirit performs in a life, Paul lists some of the ways we can tell if one is not operating as a Spirit-led individual (see also Romans 1:28-32). Their life will not produce holy living as shown in these verses. Speaking of the separation between the Spirit and the flesh previously I wrote:

“The two CANNOT coexist. The two CANNOT dwell in the same house. The two CANNOT be friends. They are on opposite sides of the spiritual spectrum and those who are filled with those evil works move more toward fulfilling those things of the flesh and farther and farther away from God, putting themselves in a position to be recipients of His wrath. “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God,” (Romans 8:6-8).

Every day every individual has the ability to choose a life of faithfulness in the Spirit or not. Joshua 24:15 sends out the charge, “Choose you this day whom ye will serve,” (emphasis mine). The choice is up to you!” (Word For Life Says/Ignoring God’s Clear Truth).

Of course, the things manifested on this list are not exclusive. The list can really go on and on with many more
things than these. The idea is sin is sin and no matter what name or title you call it by if it is what is developing in one’s life, it is not pleasing to God.

Paul begins his list here in Galatians with those sins related to sexual impropriety. God has a specific and right standard for which sexual desires are to be satisfied. It is only to be expressed through the covenant of marriage between a husband and his wife (compare 1 Corinthians 7:9). Anything outside of that; outside of a normal married male/female relationship is improper in the eyes of God. This includes “adultery, fornication uncleanness, lasciviousness.” In the book of Corinthians Paul taught that our bodies are to be used to glorify God. He said,

“Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s,” (1 Corinthians 6:18-20).
Thus, the way one can tell if one’s relationship with Jesus Christ is solidified is through their expressed sexual practices. If it doesn’t glorify God, it’s not of God and is considered a work of the flesh.

“Idolatry and witchcraft” are the next items on the list. Both of these go against our true worship of the one and only living God. Way back in the book of Exodus God handed down the Ten Commandments. The number one priority on that list and every list concerning our relationship with God was for Him to be served and worshiped as the only God. He said, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” Exodus 20:3), for this is what idolatry is. Both idolatry and witchcraft not only come in between one’s worship of God but introduces the false worship of demonic and occult practices.

God’s promise to these, “I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand . . . Thy graven images also will I cut off . . . and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands,” (Micah 5:12-13). Also to these, He says, “The soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people,” (Leviticus 20:6).

Dealing next with “hatred, variance, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, evnyings,” Paul recognizes there are destructive behaviors within some individuals, if allowed to
continue and go unchecked, will manifest itself in these hideous ways, not only effecting the heart and life of the individual, but of those around them as well. All of these behaviors are brought to fruition out of an angry and self-seeking heart that spawns jealousy and fighting amongst the people.

Most of the today’s woes and troubles extend from a lack of love and compassion one toward another (which the indulgences of these fleshly characteristics as noted above definitely do not support). People have grown to be self-seeking and self-serving, tearing down human relationships through their own egotistical view of self. But, if love is allowed to flow freely as Jesus teaches, and humans respect one another as they do themselves, the things that separate relationships will disappear and the world would be a much better place to live.

Alas, Paul is not done with this list outlining the heinous attitudes and acts of the flesh worker. He continues on to explain “murders” (the taking of life), “drunkenness” (which describes being inebriated, intoxicated, and being under the influence), and “revellings” (which speaks of partying and often has unrestrained drunkenness and explicit, ungodly sexual activity involved).

“And such like” brings to mind, if the sin is not listed here, but it is still a sin, then guess what, it is still a sin in the eyes of
God and falls under the same category as all the above sins. For that’s what a work of the flesh is: sin.

And as such, Paul says, “They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” There are consequences for choosing to live a path opposite of where God is trying to lead you. The largest consequence anyone can face is to be excluded from His heavenly kingdom. Once we step over into eternity there is no more opportunity to get it right. What was done in one’s life, good or bad, will be a permanent realization for all eternity. God’s kingdom is holy and anything that defiles will not be allowed to enter in (see Revelation 21:27).

How we live matters! Talk is cheap! We won’t have to answer for anybody but ourselves. A lot of works carried out by men and woman today will not see the light of heaven tomorrow. “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God,” (1 Cor. 6:9-10, KJV). Not on this list or the one above? It doesn’t matter. If is not born again then they will not walk the streets of glory (see John 3:5). Only the righteous (those living a Spirit-led, holy life) will inhabit that holy city.
Galatians 5:22-26 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.”

“But,” puts a delineation between those ungodly behaviors manifested as the works of the flesh, and brings to the forefront the “fruit of the Spirit” which not only is a marker of the Christ in us but also enhances our relationship with God and with others through its wonderful produce.

In speaking of the “fruit of the Spirit” notice there is not an “s” on the end of the fruit making it plural (as some pronounce it). In the end, all the characteristics named above under the fruit are a product of the one Spirit; the Holy Spirit; the Spirit of Christ that dwells in us.

With that, it’s no surprise that “love” comes at the top of the list. Consider for a moment that the two greatest commandments given are surrounded by the command to love God and love man (see Matthew 22:35-40 and Mark 12:29-31). There is no greater expression of service than that through love. There is not greater sacrifice than the sacrifice of love. There is no standard higher for Spirit-led, holy living than that
of love. Hanging off of that one simple four-lettered word is the all of how to worship God with one’s entire being (in the sphere of love) and how to relate to and treat his/her fellow man. Love is an active fruit that is known best when it is played out and expressed from your heart to the lives of others (see John 13:35). Love is a marker that you and I carry the same heart of Jesus, who for nothing but love, gave all (see John 3:16).

“Joy” comes in as an expression of happiness and rejoicing when we think of all God has done for us. In the old praise and testimony service it wasn’t unlikely to get to the end without someone standing to declare, “When I think on the goodness of Jesus, and all that He has done for me, My soul cries out, Hallelujah! I praise God for saving me,” (the closest reference I could find to this is song lyrics by GMWA Youth Mass Choir). Why? Because there is joy when we see what He has done. There is joy when we compare where we used to be and where we are now. Yes, adversity and other things may march down our path once and a while but through it all, God has given us a reason to have joy! Jesus said, “I come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly,” (John 10:10). Therefore, there should be joy flowing from Him through His Spirit in us.
And then there is “peace.” True peace is something that can never be obtained outside of anything but His Spirit in us. Since the beginning man has tried to accumulate, build, acquire stuff, and find relationships to satisfy and fill the void of peace. But, only through a true soul—felt relationship with Jesus Christ will that void ever be filled. Peace attests to the fact (as all the spiritual fruit here does) of what He has done in us and compels us to interact with one another in the same manner. The opposite of peace is described as disagreement, disharmony, hatred, and fighting (many of these we find under the works of the flesh). Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you . . .” (John 14:27). May we learn extend that same peace to those around us.

“Longsuffering, gentleness, goodness” are the next three items on the list. They teach us to be patient with one another as God has been patient with us (Oh, yes He has!). They teach us to be kind to one another (something we have learned in our elementary years but has seemed to pass from our understanding as we grow in life). They teach us to respond to others with the best of all that is in us with a generous and right spirit. The psalmist wrote, “You are good, and do good; teach me Your statutes,” (Psalm 119:68; NKJV). We learn from His Spirit personally of the good He has done and we are to produce that same good in our lives.
“Faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” God has been faithful and if we have His Spirit in us we should express the same faithfulness in our lives. And in dealing with the personal attitudes, Jesus’ life best exemplified how to live a life of humbleness and self-control, both of which the last two fruit implies. For each characteristic listed, it is for us to purposely produce in our walk of faith the very things that Christ has done for us, and “against such there is no law.” The law cannot condemn what the Spirit produces in those who live a holy life according to the production of the above-named fruit.

“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh.” Galatians 2:20 reminds us of our position in Christ: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Meaning we don’t live for ourselves or the satisfaction of our flesh anymore. We live according to Christ in us.

“If we live in the Spirit, let also walk in the Spirit.” Our works or our profession should match the One whom we say lives in us. Our Christian walk becomes representative of Him. The way we honor Him is in a life lived for Him. Previously, I wrote:
“You are identified by how you walk. You can tell if someone is tired by the way they walk. They may seem just a little slower and less focused due to exhaustion. If someone walks with a limp they can be identified as being sore or perhaps injured. A straight, persistent gait can imply confidence. Someone with pep in their step can give the impression of happiness. People pay attention to the way you walk.

People are not the only ones who pay attention to our walk. God is watching each life that goes before Him. That’s what the word walk means in the Bible. It speaks of one’s life or conversation. Their daily day-to-day affairs. Colossians 1:10 exhorts us, “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.” (KJV). Your walk matters.” (Word For Life Says/Today, I Walk!)

Therefore, if you say you have the Spirit living on the inside of you, your life should manifest it; you should be walking in the Spirit and “let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.” Let us not walk in the flesh.

Galatians 6:1-10 “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.
For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden. Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

With that, Paul gives tips or instructions on what this Spirit-led, holy life should look like.

First, there should be help offered with a spirit of meekness to one who has been “overtaken in a fault,” with the realization that it can happen to anyone and one day you may need to be restored as well for none are exempt from being “tempted.”

“Bear ye one another’s burdens” is next on the list. Christians need others to be their advocate, friend and help in times of weakness. There was a song written some years ago by Hezekiah Walker that it expressed this very idea. It says, “I
need you, You need me, We're all a part of God's body, Stand with me, Agree with me, We're all a part of God's body, It is his will that every need be supplied, You are important to me, I need you to survive (Lyrics Source: AZLyrics.com).

Following that, Paul continues to teach one is not to think highly of his or herself, which is an affiliate of pride, something God detests (Galatians 6:3; see also Luke 18:14 and 1 Peter 5:5). We are to also examine ourselves; skip around the outward façade and hone in on the real you on the inside (Galatians 6:4; see also 1 Corinthians 11:38 and 2 Corinthians 13:5). And, we are called to own up to their own responsibilities (Galatians 6:5; see also Romans 2:6).

Next, Paul teaches since we have come to the fullness of our faith through those who have taught us the word, we, in turn, ought to support those who are purveyors of the word; who live their lives getting God’s Good News out there (Galatians 6:6; see also 1 Corinthians 9:14).

Paul goes even further in his teaching letting us and the Galatian church know that for everything we do, be it to the flesh or the Spirit, we will reap the rewards of it (Galatians 6:7-9). It was Isaac Newton who said, “For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.” If this is true in physics, how much more does it ring true in the Spirit? Every seed; every action planted in life will spring up and give birth to a reaction
and a harvest whether it’s the flesh reaping “corruption” or the Spirit reaping “life everlasting.”

Because our spiritual eternity hangs in the balance of it all, Paul admonishes us to, “Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” Don’t quit! We must work at the upkeep of all that God has given us. Our press matters. Our work matters. Our walk in the Spirit and holy living matters for all eternity (see also 2 Chronicles 15:7 and Philippians 3:14).

As we come to the close of this lesson, Paul points the Galatian church in the direction of doing “good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” “Unto all men” implies everybody. No matter whom they are or what walk of life they travel; whether they believe or don’t believe people should expect good from the body of Christ.

Even more so those “who are of the household of faith” should expect good. This goes back to and supports the concept that we need one another. Christians need to have each other’s back instead of infighting and tearing one another down. We should be able to boldly and confidently lean on one another when times get tough. If we don’t, who will? Works of the flesh will rob and destroy the body of Christ but, the fruitful life of the Spirit will look beyond one’s own person to see to the needs of others, especially our brothers and sisters in Christ.
We are not in a competition with one another. We are the backbone of one another, lifting each one closer to Him that we all might reap the fruitful reward.

**Conclusion:**

A Spirit-led Christian will produce a holy life.