

Flesh and Spirit Galatians 5:16-26

Ice Breaker: What do you think is the hardest sin to resist?

Read 5:16-26 slowly. Make a note of any words or ideas which stand out for you. Discuss.

Re-read the verse about the acts of the sinful nature in verses 19-21. Why do you think they are called acts?

Re-Read the verse about the fruit of the Spirit in verses 22-23. Why do you think they are called fruit?

Paul makes a distinction between two powers which are in conflict in the believer. The acts of the flesh are desires within the believer which play out in our actions. All the acts listed are done purely for self-seeking means and for fulfilling the desires of the individual.

The fruit of the Spirit in contrast are seen as the confirmation that the Spirit is at work in believers and the outworking of this fruit is for the service and encouragement of others. The model and source of this fruit is seen in the life and works of Jesus and the implication is that this 'fruit' is the work of Jesus in and through those who 'put off' selfishness and put on love.

What kind of words or ideas arise when we think of the flesh being in conflict with the spirit?

With the acts of the Flesh and the fruit of the Spirit 'in conflict' with each other, what can be said about the life of a believer. Can we say for instance that our new lives in Christ is all smooth sailing? Why?

How do we defeat this state of conflict and 'war' in us? (v24). Discuss what this means practically.

What do you think it means to keep in step with the spirit?

How do we keep in step with the Spirit practically?

The battle in the life of a believer is one of inner conflict as the forces of the spirit and flesh each persuade us away from that which we want to do (v17). When we are tempted by the Flesh the Spirit is there calling us away to do good and when we wish to do good the Flesh is tempting us back towards self glory. Like a horseman at the head of a carriage with each hand holding one stubborn horse, we are pulled in either direction until we make the decision to leap onto the horse called 'Spirit' and ride as one with it. Paul implores his readers to put to death the fleshly desires so that they will no longer have a hold on us and to walk in sync with the Spirit so that our words and our lives will be a true reflection of Christ in us.

Prayer

Pray for a desire to have spiritual eyes, that we may discern the areas of our lives where we do not honor Christ.

Give Thanks To God that He has given us his spirit, that we may discern what is right and true. Pray for courage that our wills will conform to the Spirit in us and that Spiritual fruit will be the outcome.