

Christian Challenge of Wichita Study Guide
Galatians 5:16-26
4/10/25

Read Galatians 5:16-26.

The Opposition of the flesh and the Spirit (v. 16-18)

When Paul uses the term “flesh” in this section, he is referring to our sinful, self-gratifying human nature, which has been corrupted because of sin. For the Christian who has God’s Spirit dwelling inside of them, the flesh and the Spirit stand in opposition to one another.

Read Romans 7:15-20.

- Can you relate to what Paul is saying in Romans 7:15-20?
- How do you see the opposition of the flesh and the Spirit in your own life?

In Galatians 5:16, Paul says that, if we walk by the Spirit, we will not gratify the desires of the flesh. The language Paul uses communicates the *impossibility* of gratifying the desires of the flesh if we are walking by the Spirit.

- What does this tell us about the character and power of the Holy Spirit?
- What does this tell us about those moments in which we sin?

The Manifestation of the flesh and the Spirit (v. 19-23)

- What stands out to you about the list of the “works of the flesh” and the list of the “fruit of the Spirit”?

Paul’s warning that people who “do” the works of the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God is a reference to people who make a practice of doing these things as a normal course of daily life, not the occasional offender. In our journey of sanctification, we *should not* expect *perfection*, but we *should expect* to be moving in the *right direction* – the direction of godliness as we put works of flesh to death by the power of Holy Spirit.

- What is the danger in expecting to see perfection in our walk with God and our pursuit of right living?
- What is the danger in not expecting to see movement in right direction in our walk with God and our pursuit of right living?
- How do you hold this tension (direction not perfection), personally?

The Destruction of the flesh by the Spirit (v. 24-26)

Paul evokes the image of our flesh as having been crucified at a moment in the past. The Gospel is the truth of God to kill our sin and make us alive by the Spirit. The flesh, in which

we used to live, is crucified. And what takes its place? What are we “living in” now? The Spirit. If we are alive by the Spirit, we must keep in step with the Spirit. We must walk by the Spirit. Here are three practical tips for walking by the Spirit:

1) Identify, Confess, and Turn from Sin

Read Psalm 139:23-24.

- Is there any sin in your life you need to confess to the group?
- What do you need to do to turn from this sin?

2) Ask to be Filled by the Holy Spirit

Read Luke 11:11-13.

- Pray together, asking God to empty you of yourselves and to fill you with His Spirit.

3) Believe and Obey what God Has Said

The ministry of God’s Word and the ministry of God’s Spirit are inextricably linked. In order to truly understand, believe, and obey God’s Word, God’s Spirit must illuminate it for us. And, in order to know for certain that we’ve heard from God’s Spirit, we must look to God’s Word. God’s Spirit will never speak in opposition to what God has revealed in His Word.

- Is there anything God has spoken to you about in your Word in the past couple of weeks that you need to believe and obey?
- What would it look like to do that this week? Trust the Holy Spirit to give you the power to follow through as you walk by His power.