

## Exegetical Notes – Galatians 5:16-24

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### Galatians 5:16-24

#### Verses 16-18

***<sup>16</sup> So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. <sup>17</sup> For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. <sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.***

- The great principle of the Christian way of life has been set before the Galatians: They are set free from bondage to the Old Covenant Law by the grace of God. They receive God's gift of grace through faith in Jesus Christ. But, they must not use their freedom as license to sin, to gratify the desires of the flesh. They are not to live for themselves, but to do everything out of love for each other.
- It is not natural for people to live like this. We are born in sin. We are not "good" according to our nature. It is normal to seek to gratify the desires of the flesh. The desire to pursue the desires of the flesh cannot be eradicated in this life (see Romans 7:15-25). That is what the Law made clear.
- Christians are to walk by the Spirit. But the Spirit and the desires of the flesh are in direct contradiction to each other. They battle with each other. But Christians are not free to do whatever the flesh leads them to crave. They do not do what they want to do but what the Spirit of God calls them to do.

#### Verses 19-21

***<sup>19</sup> The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; <sup>20</sup> idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions <sup>21</sup> and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.***

- Paul says that we all know what the desires of the flesh look like. They are obvious around us. He gives a non-inclusive list of what the acts of the flesh look like. They looked then as they do now.
- Paul says that those who live to satisfy the desires of the flesh will not inherit heaven. Not everyone goes to heaven. Those who go to heaven are those who confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. They struggle to live by the Spirit of God which indwells them and not to satisfy the desires of the flesh.

### **Verses 22-24**

***<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.***

- “The fruit of the Spirit is Love!” The noun “fruit” is a singular Greek noun. There are not many “fruits of the Spirit.” There is just one “fruit.” That fruit is LOVE! (see Galatians 5:13-15). The issue here is how Christians live or walk. They are to Love God and their neighbors as themselves. What the Holy Spirit enables Christians to do is love. So, the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE.
- The nouns which follow the word love are explanations of what love looks like, not additional fruits of the Spirit.
- The Spirit and the desires of the flesh are at war with each other. Those who belong to Jesus have received the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit they are able to LOVE!

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