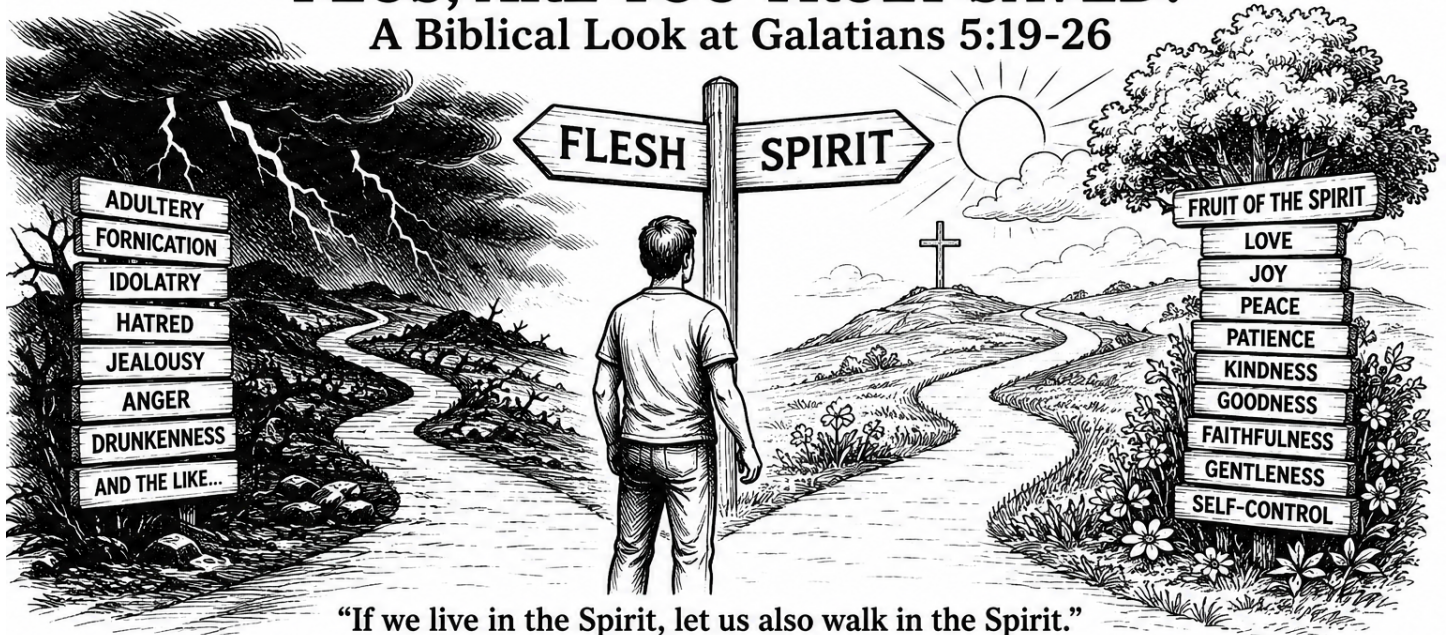


WALKING BY THE SPIRIT OR LIVING IN THE FLESH?

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PLUS, ARE YOU TRULY SAVED?
A Biblical Look at Galatians 5:19-26



“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”
Galatians 5:25

One of the clearest contrasts in the New Testament is found in Galatians 5. The **Apostle Paul paints two pictures**. One picture is a life controlled by the flesh. The other is a life controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Paul is not merely describing occasional mistakes that believers make. He is describing two different lifestyles and two different directions of life.

The question is not, "Have I ever sinned?" The question is, "Who is leading my life?"

The Works of the Flesh

Galatians 5:19-21 (NKJV) lists the works of the flesh:

"Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like..."

Paul then gives a very serious warning:

"...those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."
(Galatians 5:21 NKJV)

Notice the word **practice**.

Paul is not speaking about a believer who stumbles, repents, and turns back to God. He is speaking about someone who continually lives in these sins as a pattern of life without repentance.

The Greek idea behind "practice" refers to ongoing, habitual behavior.

Here comes the TOE STEPPING!!

The Works of the Flesh and the Evidence of Salvation

In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul lists what he calls the **works of the flesh**. These are the sinful desires and behaviors that flow from a heart that is not surrendered to God's Spirit.

- **Adultery** – sexual unfaithfulness in marriage.
- **Fornication** – sexual sin outside of marriage.
- **Uncleanness** – moral impurity and sinful thoughts or actions.
- **Lewdness** – shameless, sinful behavior and lack of moral restraint.
- **Idolatry** – placing anything above God in our lives.
- **Sorcery** – involvement with occult practices, witchcraft, or spiritual counterfeits.

- **Hatred** – ongoing hostility and bitterness toward others.
- **Contentions** – constant arguing, quarreling, and division.
- **Jealousies** – envy of what others have or receive.
- **Outbursts of Wrath** – uncontrolled anger.
- **Selfish Ambitions** – self-centered pursuits that exalt self over God and others.
- **Dissensions** – causing divisions among people.
- **Heresies** – promoting false teachings contrary to God's truth.
- **Envy** – resentment toward another person's blessings.
- **Murders** – hatred taken to its ultimate sinful expression.
- **Drunkenness** – intoxication and loss of self-control.
- **Revelries** – wild partying and sinful excess.
- **And the Like** – any other sinful behavior that reflects the same fleshly nature.

Paul then gives a solemn warning:

"Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:21 NKJV)

If someone continually practices these sins without conviction, repentance, or desire to change, are they truly saved?

The New Testament repeatedly teaches that salvation produces transformation. We are saved by grace through faith, not by our works. However, when a person is genuinely saved, God gives them the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, guides us into truth, corrects us when we wander, and leads us toward holiness. While believers are not perfect and may struggle with temptation, they cannot comfortably live in ongoing rebellion without the Spirit's conviction.

What Does Paul Mean?

Paul teaches that a person who continually embraces the works of the flesh and refuses repentance is demonstrating that they are not being led by the Spirit of God.

A Christian may struggle.

A Christian may fail.

A Christian may fall into sin.

But a true believer cannot comfortably remain in sin without conviction from the Holy Spirit.

When we belong to Jesus, the Holy Spirit works within us to correct us, convict us, guide us, and transform us.

Does Habitual Sin Mean Someone Is Not Saved?

The New Testament repeatedly teaches that genuine salvation produces a changed life.

We are not saved by good works.

We are saved by grace through **faith**.

However, genuine **faith produces evidence**.

Jesus said: "You will know them by their fruits." (Matthew 7:16 NKJV)

If someone claims Christ but continually practices the works of the flesh with no repentance, no conviction, and no desire to obey God, Scripture tells us to examine whether that profession of faith is genuine.

This does not mean Christians become perfect.

It means Christians become different.

Matthew 7:23 and the Danger of False Profession

Jesus gave one of the most sobering warnings in Scripture:

"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:23 NKJV)

Notice Jesus did not say: "I knew you once."

He said: "I never knew you."

These individuals that Jesus was talking about had religious activity, but they lacked a genuine relationship with Christ.

Their lives were marked by lawlessness rather than obedience.

Their profession did not match their practice.

This connects closely with Galatians 5:21.

A person can claim Christianity outwardly while inwardly remaining surrendered to the flesh.

The Evidence of the Holy Spirit

Paul immediately contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23 (NKJV): "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."

Fruit grows where life exists.

An apple tree produces apples because it is an apple tree.

Likewise, a believer produces spiritual fruit because the Holy Spirit lives within them.

The fruit may develop gradually, but it should be present and growing.

Walking By the Spirit

Paul concludes: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."
(Galatians 5:25 NKJV)

Walking in the Spirit means:

- Following God's Word
- Obeying the Holy Spirit's conviction
- Repenting when we sin
- Pursuing holiness
- Growing in Christ daily
- Crucifying sinful desires

The Christian life is not sinless perfection.

It is Spirit-led transformation.

Wisdom Nuggets

- A saved person may stumble into sin, but a saved person cannot comfortably camp in sin without the Holy Spirit sounding the alarm.
- The fruit of the Spirit is not produced by human effort alone. It grows as we stay connected to Jesus and surrender to the Holy Spirit.

Holy Highlight

The warning of Galatians 5:21 is not meant to make believers live in fear. It is meant to encourage self-examination and remind us that genuine faith produces genuine fruit.

Conclusion

Galatians 5 challenges every believer to ask a simple but important question:

Who is leading my life, the flesh or the Spirit?

The flesh produces works that lead away from God.

The Spirit produces fruit that reflects Christ.

Paul's warning about those who practice sin is a call to repentance, not despair. God's desire is not to condemn people but to transform them through the power of the Holy Spirit.

If we truly belong to Jesus, the Holy Spirit will continually draw us toward holiness, conviction, obedience, and spiritual growth.

The evidence of salvation is not perfection.

The evidence of salvation is a life that is increasingly being led by the Spirit of God! Amen!

MORE.....

What Do Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:26-27, and 1 Timothy 1:10 Teach?

Speaking the Truth in Love

When studying difficult topics, Christians are called to hold two truths together:

1. God's Word is truth.
2. God's love and grace are available to every sinner who comes to Christ.

The Bible teaches that all people have sinned and need a Savior. No one is beyond the reach of God's mercy, forgiveness, and transforming power.

Leviticus 18:22

"You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination."
(NKJV)

In Leviticus 18, God gives Israel instructions regarding sexual purity and holiness. This chapter contains a list of prohibited sexual relationships and practices.

Verse 22 specifically identifies sexual relations between two men as contrary to God's design for sexuality. The context of the chapter is God's call for His people to live differently from the surrounding pagan cultures.

The Bible presents God's design for marriage and sexual intimacy as being between one man and one woman within the covenant of marriage.

Romans 1:26-27

"For this reason, God gave them up to vile passions..." (NKJV)

In Romans 1, Paul describes humanity's rejection of God and the consequences of exchanging God's truth for human desires.

Paul includes same-sex sexual behavior among a broader list of sins that result from mankind's rebellion against God. The larger context is not about one particular sin but about humanity's universal need for salvation.

By the time Paul reaches Romans chapter 3, he concludes:

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23 NKJV)

Romans 1 is therefore not meant to single out one group of people as uniquely sinful. Rather, it demonstrates that all people need the saving grace found in Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 1:10 "...for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers..." (NKJV)

Paul is explaining how God's moral law exposes sin and reveals mankind's need for repentance.

The passage lists various sins that are contrary to sound doctrine. Paul's purpose is not merely to condemn but to show why humanity needs the Gospel.

Immediately afterward, Paul points to God's mercy in his own life.

The Gospel Changes Lives

One of the most important truths is that the Bible does not teach that any particular sin places someone beyond God's grace.

Paul himself was once a persecutor of Christians.

David committed adultery and murder.

The woman caught in adultery was forgiven.

The thief on the cross found salvation.

The power of the Gospel is that Jesus saves sinners and transforms lives.

A Biblical Balance

Christians should never redefine what Scripture calls sin.

At the same time, Christians should never act as though any sinner is beyond hope.

Jesus calls all people to repentance and faith.

Whether the struggle involves pride, greed, adultery, drunkenness, sexual immorality, anger, homosexuality, or any other sin, the answer is the same: Repent, believe the Gospel, and follow Christ!

These passages remind us that God is holy and that His standards do not change. They also remind us that every one of us needs a Savior.

The message of the Bible is not merely "Stop sinning."

The message of the Bible is:

Come to Jesus.

Through His death and resurrection, sinners can be forgiven, transformed, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to walk in obedience to God.

The Gospel is not about condemning people.

The Gospel is about Jesus saving people and changing lives.

I need to share this short story from the bible about How God changed Paul...

Paul's Testimony: From Unbelief to Transformation

In 1 Timothy 1:13, Paul reflects on his life before he met Jesus:

"Although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."
(NKJV)

Before his conversion, Paul was not a follower of Jesus. He opposed Christ, persecuted Christians, and even approved of their imprisonment and death. Paul believed he was serving God, but he was acting in unbelief and did not recognize Jesus as the Messiah.

Yet God did not leave Paul in his unbelief.

Paul encountered the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), and everything changed. The man who once persecuted Christians became one of the greatest missionaries and teachers of the Gospel.

In the very next verse, Paul writes: "And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 1:14 NKJV)

Notice what happened. Paul did not remain the same person he once was. The grace of Jesus transformed him. Where there had been unbelief, there was now faith. Where there had been hatred, there was now love.

Where there had been persecution, there was now preaching. Where there had been darkness, there was now a life surrendered to Christ.

Paul's testimony is a powerful reminder that God's grace does not merely forgive sinners; it changes them. Salvation is not simply saying a prayer and continuing in the same lifestyle. Genuine faith in Christ results in a transformed heart and a new direction in life.

Paul is living proof that no one is beyond the reach of God's mercy. If Jesus could save a blasphemer and persecutor like Paul and turn him into a faithful servant, He can save and transform anyone who comes to Him in repentance and faith.

The message of Paul's testimony is clear:

Jesus does not just forgive our past. He changes our future.

How to Be Truly Saved

The Bible teaches that salvation is not earned through good works, church attendance, religious activities, or trying to be a good person. Salvation is a gift of God's grace received through faith in Jesus Christ.

The first step is recognizing that you are a sinner in need of a Savior.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23 NKJV)

The second step is believing that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day.

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8 NKJV)

The third step is repentance. Repentance means turning away from sin and turning toward God. It is a change of heart that leads to a change of direction.

Jesus said: "Repent, and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:15 NKJV)

The fourth step is placing your faith and trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

"That if you confess with your mouth the **Lord Jesus** and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9 NKJV)

When a person truly comes to Christ in faith and repentance, God forgives their sins, gives them eternal life, and places His Holy Spirit within them.

"And because you are sons, God has sent forth the **Spirit of His Son** into your hearts..." (Galatians 4:6 NKJV)

A truly saved person will not become perfect overnight, but they will begin a new journey. The **Holy Spirit** will convict them of sin, guide them into truth, help them grow in holiness, and produce spiritual fruit in their life.

Salvation is not merely saying a prayer. Salvation is entering into a relationship with Jesus Christ that transforms your heart and changes the direction of your life.

Jesus said: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." (John 10:27 NKJV)

If you have never placed your faith in Jesus Christ, today is the day to come to Him. His arms are open, His grace is available, and His forgiveness is complete for all who call upon His name.

"For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13 NKJV)

A Prayer of Faith

"Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and that I need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins and rose again from the dead. I repent of my sins and place my trust in You alone as my Lord and Savior. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit and help me follow You all the days of my life. Thank You for Your mercy, grace, and gift of eternal life. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Wisdom Nugget

Being truly saved is not about becoming religious. It is about being reconciled to God through Jesus Christ and allowing the Holy Spirit to transform your life from the inside out.

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