

Galatians 5:16-18

Paul gives a command and a promise—5:16 ¹⁶ *But [δέ] I say,*

- 1) The command—*walk/keep on walking* [pres. act. impv. περιπατέω] *in the Spirit*,
 - a) Live/conduct your whole life (in thought and act) in the sphere of the Spirit, dependent on Him in all things. The Spirit is the environment in which we exercise our liberty in Christ.
 - b) Remember the promise to Israel regarding the New Covenant: Ezekiel 36:27
 - c) Christ lived in this manner. He constantly walked in the Spirit and never sinned. Although He was tempted, He never yielded because He was totally submissive to the will of God expressed in Scripture. (Gromacki)
- 2) The promise—*and you^{pl} will not* [οὐ μή] *carry out* [aor. act. subj. τελέω] *the desires* [ἐπιθυμία] *of the flesh*.
 - a) Remember James 1:14-15. The desire may entice and draw us away, but it can never conceive as long as we are fulfilling the desires of the Spirit.

Life in the Spirit is not easy—5:17 ¹⁷ *For [γάρ] ...*

- 1) There are conflicting desires within us
 - a) *the flesh has desires* [pres. act. ind. ἐπιθυμέω] *in conflict with* [κατά] *the Spirit*
 - b) *and the Spirit* (has desires) *in conflict with* [κατά] *the flesh*;
 - c) This is **not** a battle of equals. Paul is merely stating that they are in conflict. While they are in opposition to one another, they are not equal forces. Before salvation the flesh was dominant, which lead to death. Now that we are saved, the Spirit is dominant, conforming us to the image of Christ.
- 2) The desires hinder each other
 - a) *and [δέ] these are in conflict with* [pres. dep. ind. ἀντίκειμαι] *each other*,
 - i) Every believer experiences this inner battle within him or her
 - b) *so that* [ἵνα] *you^{pl} cannot do* [pres. act. subj. ποιέω] *the things you^{pl} want* [pres. act. subj. θέλω].
 - i) There are times when we as believers want to do what the flesh desires. The Spirit prevents us from living according to the flesh. He leads us to holiness.
 - ii) Genuine believers have new desires brought about by the Holy Spirit beginning at the moment of salvation. The flesh opposes these new desires.

A resolution to the conflict of 5:17—5:18

- 1) If ...—5:18a ¹⁸ *But [δέ] if* [εἰ, 1st class condition, assumed true for sake of argument] *you^{pl} are guided by* [pres. pass. ind. ἄγω] *the Spirit*, (cf. Luke 4:1; Romans 8:14)
 - a) All believers **are** guided by the Holy Spirit to Whom we must submit.
- 2) Then ...—5:18b *you^{pl} are* [pres. act. ind. εἰμί] *not under* [ὑπό] (the restrictive yoke of) *the law*.

- a) All believers are out from under the Law. But remember how some Galatian readers wanted to be placed under the Law (cf. 4:21).
- b) The Spirit of God cannot perform His sanctifying work while a person is trying to become spiritual through conformity to a set of laws. The Spirit can lead only when a Christian sees himself set free from the law and placed under grace. (Gromacki)
- c) Dr. Kent reminds us:
 - i) We are not under the penalty of the Law; Christ paid this in full at the cross as our substitute
 - ii) We are not under the jurisdiction of the Law; it has been annulled
 - iii) We are not in violation of the intent of the Law; i.e. loving one another

Summary

- 1) Dr. McCune reminds us: *Walking in the Spirit is a lifestyle characterized by faith, a trust in God for the daily Christian experience and battle with sin. ... A life of faith/dependence on the Holy Spirit produces obedience to the special revelation of the word of God and thus leads to a life controlled by the Spirit of God. It is a lifestyle or moral and spiritual direction, and is not a state of semi-perfection or a level of living by a select few that is entered only by a crisis experience subsequent to the new birth. (2:346)*

Take-home truth: As Christians, it is the ever-growing direction of our life to be walking on the Spirit's path. Cf. 1st John 3:9