

KEEP IN STEP WITH THE SPIRIT

Humanity needs to *know the truth* (about Christ and this) *truth will set you free. John 8:32*

We can be free from the influence of our sinful nature only through and by Jesus.

The Apostle Paul's letter to the churches in Galatia confronts the tension between the powers of legalism and sin in contrast to freedom from legalism and sin.

In *Galatians 5*, Paul explains that no amount of legalism can change a person's basic sinful nature.

Galatians 5:1 (nlt) *Christ has really set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.*

Freedom in Christ is not a license to live recklessly.

Galatians 5:13 (gnt) *"As for you, my friends, you were called to be free. But do not let this freedom become an excuse for letting your physical desires control you."*

Our freedom should be used to love and to serve others, not to damage or to injure others.

Galatians 5:10-15 (gnt) “But I still feel confident about you. Our life in union with the Lord makes me confident that you will not take a different view and that whoever is upsetting you will be punished by God. But as for me, my friends, if I continue to preach that circumcision is necessary, why am I still being persecuted? If that were true, then my preaching about the cross of Christ would cause no trouble. I wish that the people who are upsetting you would go all the way; let them go on and castrate themselves! As for you, my friends, you were called to be free. But do not let this freedom become an excuse for letting your physical desires control you. Instead, let love make you serve one another. For the whole law is summed up in one commandment; “Love you neighbour as you love yourself. But if you act like wild animals, hurting and harming each other then watch out, or you will completely destroy one another.”

THE CONFLICT

God’s Spirit within us and our sinful human nature are at war with one another – a conflict.

Galatians 5:16-17 (gnt) What I say is this: let the Spirit direct your lives, and you will not satisfy the desires of the human nature. For what our human nature wants is opposed to what the Spirit wants, and what the Spirit wants is opposed to what our human nature wants. These two are enemies, and this means that you cannot do what you want to do.

Our sinful appetite desires to control and influence our thought life and behaviour.

The Holy Spirit within us and our sinful nature have different appetites, this is what creates our conflict within, mostly played out in our minds.

We can't avoid this tension of pleasing the Holy Spirit and fighting against our fleshly appetites.

THE SOLUTION: To surrender our thoughts, will and desires unto the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:18 (nabre) But if you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Remembering, Paul is conveying that legalism will not change a person's basic sinful nature.

Being "led" or "walking in the Spirit" is the opposite to surrendering to the desires of the flesh.

Galatians 5:19-21 (nlt) When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarrelling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, wild parties and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

How do we control our sinful nature when it can produce such horrible behaviour?

The old sinful nature must be crucified!

Galatians 5:24 “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

Romans 6 explains the believer is identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

Christ not only died for us, but we died with Christ.

Christ died for us to remove the penalty of our sin, but we died with Christ to break sin’s power.

Galatians 2:20 (niv) “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

We must not make “*provision for the flesh*” (**Romans 13:14**) by feeding it what it enjoys.

The Holy Spirit enables us to produce the good fruit of character.

Galatians 5:22–23 (niv) But the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control. There is no law against such things as these.

Fruit reveals life in the believer, it is the evidence of walking in the Spirit.

Galatians 5:25 (niv) “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”

Jesus desires that we produce “*much more fruit.*”
(*John 15:2; 5*)

Our Christian character is built by applying these nine fruits of the Spirit into our daily lives.

Galatians 5:25 means to “*keep in step with the Spirit*” - not to run ahead and not to lag behind – but to walk in rhythm with the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit works within us to be free from the grip of sin.

He enables us to fulfil the law of love, to overcome the flesh, and to bear fruit.

Will you surrender to the Holy Spirit and let Him do His work in your life?