

Galatians 5 Commentary-Barber

Galatians 5 Commentary Verse by Verse Exposition Dr. Wayne Barber

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Galatians 5:1-6 Born to Be Free

We're finally in chapter 5 of Galatians. Do you believe that? Some of you thought you wouldn't live long enough, but we made it. Galatians chapter 5, we're going to be talking about freedom, born to be free. As believers we're all born of the Holy Spirit of God to be free. I want to make sure we understand that. Freedom never means the right to do as you please; freedom is the power to do as we should. That's the difference. God's requirement has never changed. The difference is we've changed because Christ has come to live in us to meet the demands of what He has in each of our lives.

The word for "free" or "freedom" is used at least 10 times in Galatians, five times in Gal 4, that we just came out of. This is in contrast. There's a huge contrast here to the word "slave" or "slaves," plural, which is used five times in the epistle, and then the word "bondage," which is used twice. You see what Paul has done. He's set up a contrast, that which is free and that which is in bondage. And that's what his point is. We're free in Christ. If we choose not to obey Him and live surrendered to Him then we've put ourselves back into bondage. This freedom from the law is what makes us all slaves. Actually, we were slaves, and God sets us free from that which we were enslaved to before. The law is what enslaves us; freedom is what God gives to us.

In Romans 7:5 it shows us that the law initiates sin. Now you see what has happened is the Galatians have gone back up under law. They have actually initiated religious sin in their life. You see, there's two kinds of sin. There's rebellious sin and there's religious sin. Any time we do anything in our own flesh, that's sin. And Romans 7:5 says, "For while we were in the flesh," he speaks of a time when we were lost, "the sinful passions," now watch this, "which were aroused by the law." Now, wait a minute. I don't understand that. You mean the law's a good thing. That's right. But it arouses sin in our life. It says, "Were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit unto death." The law affects each of us in different ways. Some of us rebel against it. Some of us religiously try to attain what we can't attain and then be proud of what we've done. So either side it's sin.

If you're riding down the road and the speed limit is 75 and you see me driving I'll probably be in front of you. I never have gone the religious route. My flesh pulls me the other way. I'm doing 83 to see if I can get by with it. And some of you, you see, are different. You'll drive 74 and I'll travel past you. And you'll say, "Look at him. He doesn't love Jesus as much as I do." And so you make yourself feel proud because you've obeyed the law. That's the way sin operates. So often we're pointing fingers at those who rebel, but we're not understanding the religious side is just as rebellious. It's just masked by what we call good things.

Well, either way, no matter our response, it's sin. And sin puts us into bondage. That is bondage; that's slavery. Our flesh enslaves us, but the agenda of God is to set people free. That's a beautiful word, isn't it, "free." Free to be in Christ what God desires us to be. And, as a matter of fact, if you go back into the gospels, John 8:32 says, "And you will know the truth," now remember this, "and the truth shall" do what? "Set you free." But now what is truth? Well, we know that's the Word of God. But wait a minute. In John 14:6, "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and I am,'" the what? "'I am the truth.'" And He says, "I am the life. No one comes to the Father but by Me." So who is it ultimately that sets us free? It's Christ. Yeah, you say it's His Word. Well, yes, but it's the author of the Word; then the Word becomes important to us. It's the God of the Word. He's the One who sets us free, free from ourselves. If you're wondering what He's talking about, free from ourselves. And then John 8:36 says, "So if the Son makes you free you are free," how?

“Indeed, indeed.” Are you free this morning? Are you living in the freedom that Jesus has offered to you when you came and received Him in salvation? When we’re free in Christ then He can produce through us what He requires.

But here’s the key, and this is what Paul brings up in Gal 4. We have a choice. God respects us more than we ever respected Him. He gives us a choice. I can choose to put myself right back into bondage if that’s what I want to do. He gives me that choice. Or I can choose to walk in the freedom that God has given to us. And those choices are going to end up reflecting in our character; it’s going to end up in our behavior; it’s going to show itself at some point.

In fact, I want to divert just for a second. I won’t stay long. But in Gal 6:7 he makes a statement that could have been made in Gal 1:1, because it’s a magnet that pulls every bit of Galatians right into it. And look what he said, he says in Gal 6:7, “Do not be deceived, God is not,” what? “mocked; for whatever a man sows, this will he also reap.” And then Gal 6:8, “For the one who sows,” and by the way, the sowing is the choices we make. We only have two, we either to do it our way or to do it God’s way. We only have two; that’s all we ever have. “For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.” And that governs the whole book of Galatians. The Galatians had made a foolish choice. They chose their flesh and put themselves back into slavery. They’re now enslaved to their flesh. They could have said yes to Jesus and continued in the freedom Paul knew they had at one point.

Now Paul says in Gal 4:22, “For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman.” Now these two sons represent two choices that Abraham made. And this is interesting, same father, two different women and two different choices. One was produced by Hagar; that was the bondwoman, the slave. Slaves can only bear slaves, and always the identity of the son was marked by the mother. And then the other was the free woman, or Sarah, and that was Isaac. So you had Ishmael and you had Isaac. Isaac was born of the promise. Isaac was born to the true woman. That was a choice that Abraham and Sarah made finally to trust God and here comes the Isaac. But then on the other side we have Ishmael and that was the choice they made to try to help God out to do it themselves.

In Gal 4:23 Paul shows that “the son of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh.” Now he’s beginning to set us up. You’ll see this in Gal 5. In Gal 4:23 he says, “But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh.” Now what does that mean? That means that this was a result of Abraham and Sarah’s fleshly efforts to accomplish what God had promised. And Gal 4:23 goes on to explain that Isaac was born according to the promise “and the son of the free woman through the promise.” You see, what God required God enabled and she was 90 and he was 100 years old. If you’ve ever studied Hebrews 11, it says she was way past the years of childbearing. And God had to do a miracle to cause that child to come about. That’s the way God works.

When I do it Wayne’s way, it’s an Ishmael. When I do what God has put on my heart it’s an Isaac and that’s the two choices everybody has in life. You don’t have to have a committee meeting to achieve God’s promise unless you’re going to get together and pray and trust God to do it. You don’t work for it. You receive it by faith. You believe God and believe His Word.

Now, this lifestyle of trusting God, yielding to His Word, now listen, is the essence of what freedom is all about. You say, wait a minute, that doesn’t sound very free to me. I mean, it looks to me like you’re still a slave to somebody. Exactly; now you’ve got it. Jesus said no man can serve how many masters? Now, what did He just tell you? He just told you every man’s a servant. We’re servants whether we like it or not. Hey, we’ve got to make our choice who it is we’re going to serve. In Christ we’re able to see this happen daily in our lives as we choose to serve Him. As we choose to say yes to Him we enter the freedom, the right and the power to be what God wants us to be. Isaac was a result of believing God. That’s what freedom is. I’m not free unless I’m under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. I am not free. I don’t care, positionally, what I can say I am. I’m not experiencing that unless I’m under the Lordship of Christ.

In Gal 4:28, after comparing Hagar as a slave and Sarah, the wife of Abraham to two covenants—Hagar, the covenant of law; Sarah, the covenant of grace given to Abraham, of course—he brings up this point. “And you, brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.” You didn’t get saved because of your works. That’s law. You’re of another covenant. You trusted God, you bowed before Him and that’s where you were saved. That’s how you were saved. By simply believing God you received the promise. That’s exactly the way Isaac was born. We trusted Christ, we’re born again; instantly we were set free from the law. Isn’t that awesome! To be set free.

There’s a song in one of the hymnbooks that says, “Free from the law, oh happy condition.” I want to tell you something, there are a lot of Christians today that can’t sing that song because they’re not happy, because they’re still back up under that old mindset. “I’ve got to do something for God. He’s going to kick me out of the family.” And Paul says, what are you doing? You’re already in the family. You can’t be kicked out. You can’t be unborn. Now learn to enjoy what you already are. Learn to enjoy Him by saying yes to Him.

Well in Gal 4:29-31 he shows how that the people with the law mentality, they’re two kinds of people. He tells us this, and they’re believers. Two kinds of believers in every church in America, in the world today. It doesn’t matter where you go, there are two kinds.

One with the works mentality—I've got to go do something for God or it'll never get done. It's up to me and I've got to do something and do it now or it'll never happen. And then you've got those people who say, no sir, I'm going to trust God and He's going to do it His way, in His time and I'm just going to let Him do it.

Now you've got those two kinds of people. You know what Paul says? There's going to be hostility between those two kinds. Really, he gets your eyes off of the people. The hostility is between flesh and Spirit, and he brings that up beautifully later on in chapter 5. Gal 4:29, he says "But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is also now." He's using this as an analogy. Don't get hung up in the people here. Understand what he's saying. Flesh and Spirit war against each other. Is he not going to say that in Gal 5? The flesh wars against the Spirit, the Spirit against the flesh. That's Gal 5:17. War has been declared.

Gal 4:30: "What does the Scripture say? 'Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman.'" What he's saying is the two cannot peacefully coexist. You can't live after the flesh and live after the Spirit in the same breath. You cannot do it. One's got to go; that's what he's trying to say. It's just an analogy. He's using people to bring about a beautiful point and scriptural truth.

And then in Gal 4:31 he says, "So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman." In other words, act like it. When I was studying this it was like God was saying, "Hey, Wayne, are you paying attention?" Live like it, son! You're a child of promise. Walk in the freedom that God has given to you. Those with the law mentality, those with the slave mentality; I've been there. Have you been there? I've been there many times. When I choose to handle something my way, it's a mess. And I don't like to be around people that are walking in that grace mentality.

My daughter walked up to me one time. I was really frustrated about something. And she walked up to me and put her arm around me and says "Daddy, remember who lives in you." Get away from me. I don't want to hear that. Don't remind me of that. You see, there was even that hostile relationship there because I was walking after the flesh and she was walking in the Spirit. There is no peaceful coexistence when you have two mentalities trying to coexist. Let me ask you this morning, how about you? Have you been persecuted lately for walking according to the Spirit? That's what happens. That's what he said. He said the son of the bondwoman persecuted the one who's the son of the free woman. You know, many times in my life I'm wondering what's going wrong because everything's going too good. I begin to realize, when you start walking, trusting God, at some point in time there's going to be a battle royal by the one mindset against another mindset.

This leads us into Gal 5. You say, why so much review? Well, you see, they didn't have chapters and verses. It was one flow; it was like a river. And you've got to get in that current. This is what he's been saying. Now he says in Gal 5:1, "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore"—don't you love those "therefore's?" Any time you see a "therefore" always look to see what it's there for, okay. We just told you what it was there for. It was for freedom that Christ set us free. "Therefore, keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery."

Freedom again, is never the right to do as you please; it's the power to do as you should. Many people have said over the years in different churches, this "felt needs" thing that's going around right now, well, "quit teaching Scripture and tell me how to be a better father." "Well, come on, meet my needs every day. I'm single and I need to have some help here." Or "I need to be a better husband." Get a clue. That's a felt need. That's not even a real need. You know what the real need is? Let Jesus be the father through you that you can't be. Let Jesus be the husband through you that you can't be. Let Jesus be the One that you're trying to be but you can't. You go to these conferences "17 Ways to Be a Better Husband."

Oh, good grief! Jesus said quit trying to do better and let Me do through you what you cannot do. This is the truth of Scripture. Everybody's running over here, running over there. Churches are being built on felt needs. I'll tell you what, when they're tested it will not hold them up. Only God's word will hold us up. God didn't come to renew my flesh, God came to replace it. There was one guy in one conference that said put a teddy bear in the freezer and put a little note on it that says, "I love you" and your wife one day will find that teddy bear and it'll really help your relationship. Is that not the dumbest thing you've ever heard in your life? If my wife ever finds a frozen teddy bear in my freezer she's going to have me committed. That's not the way you do it. She could give a rip about a frozen teddy bear. What she wants is to see Jesus in me. And that's what Paul's trying to say. You don't make yourself a better person, you let the better person who's Jesus replace you. You need to surrender to Him. You decrease, John the Baptist said, so that He might increase in your life. That's the Christian life. That's as practical as anything you can get. But people say oh, that's too heavy teaching. Hey, come on.

Galatians 5:1, "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery." Three things I want you to see in this wonderful passage in Gal 5. If you can't get excited about this then this would be a great day to get saved. I mean, this is so good. This is what Jesus has done for our life. First of all is the priority of keeping our freedom. Now, I'm not talking about in positional way. You always have it in Christ. But what I'm talking about is experientially, keeping it, maintaining it, walking in it day by day by day by day. "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore, keep standing

firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.” Actually there are two commands in this verse. They’re not suggestions, they’re commands; and they must take priority in our life. This is the priority of every believer.

I think the more accurate translation is the Young’s translation and it reads, “In the freedom then with which Christ did make you free, stand ye and be not held fast again by a yoke of servitude.” That’s word-for-word in the Greek text. Paul refers to the way we received our freedom. How do we get free? Where did this freedom come from? I’ll tell you where it came from. We didn’t work for it, but Christ did what? Set us free. Now, that’s the truth he’s emphasizing. Christ set you free. Remember that. You didn’t have to do anything other than bow before Him, walk and trust Him by faith and He set you free. How did Christ do this? It’s by fulfilling the law for us. See, no man has ever been able to fulfill the law. And so Jesus came as a man and set us free from it. He fulfilled it and then paid our debt on the cross so that we could be free forever to walk in the relationship God has for us, becoming what He says we already are.

In Romans 8:1, “There is then now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus who walk not according to the flesh”—remember, Ishmael was born according to the flesh—“but according the Spirit.” Then Ro 8:2, “For the law of the Spirit of the life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of the sin and of the death.” The law, or better understood, the authority of the Holy Spirit of God, His very presence in our lives, says to the law, “Back off, you’ve been fulfilled. This person has been set free from all of your claims and all of your demands.” And then verse 3 continues, “For what the Law was not able to do in that it was weak through the flesh.” See, the Law has never been able to produce what it demands. To accomplish what the Law demands, no man can do that, because our flesh is too weak. It’s sinful, and so Christ did it for us.

Ro 8:3: “For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did”—watch this—“sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled [where?] in us.” What? The requirement of the Law, love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, body, soul and strength; love your neighbor as yourself—that’s the two summations of the Law—is going to be “fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” Now, Paul says we’ve been set free from all that the Law demands. Jesus met those demands. There’s not anything you can do He’s not already done. Now let Him live His life through you. “It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to the yoke, or yoke of slavery.”

Now what’s the two commands? Keep standing firm; that’s present active, imperative verb. Imperative means a command. In other words, stand and keep on standing. That’s an order, not a suggestion; that’s an order. That’s a command. You stand. You stand. Now the first question that comes to your mind is: what do I stand on? What does the verse tell you? That Christ set you free, not by works, but by faith, “not by works lest any man should boast.” Stand on that truth. What is he saying? What he’s saying is the One who set you free is the only One who can keep you free. And the way He set you free was by faith, and the way He keeps you free is by faith. If you’ll trust Him, worship Him, offer your life to Him, be a vessel that He can use, you’ll walk in the freedom He’s already established for you. Stand on that truth. Don’t go back over here and say “I’ve got to do this, this, this, this, this and this or I’ll never be free.” If you want to remain free, stay yielded to the One who has set you free.

Well, the verb “stand” is the word *steko*. It means, it comes from *histemi*. It means stay put. Stay put, don’t move away from the attitude of simply trusting Christ. Now, you think about it for a second. How many times have we moved away from that attitude, especially when something unexpected happens in our life? Maybe it’s a tragedy, but something’s happened and we’re hit right in the face, and what’s our first response? Many times, of the flesh, is to run to do something about it ourselves, rather than to stand firm. Don’t move. You trust Him. You trust Him.

We’ve got a man in this church that I love dearly and I’ve loved his wife. She’s gone on to be with the Lord. And I was at the hospital that night when she died. And we were standing there; I want to tell you something, I watched a man refuse to budge. He stood on what God had said. He stood on the fact that his wife was about to be ushered into the kingdom of God, in the presence of Christ. He stood there and I walked away feeling like I had been ministered to. I didn’t minister to anybody; he ministered to me when we were there. That’s what Paul’s saying. Don’t you dare; don’t let any trauma, don’t let any circumstance, don’t let anything come into your life that causes you to step away from the freedom you have in Christ. You can be what God says you ought to be if you’ll stay yielded to Him. He will hold you up. That’s what his point is.

You ever seen those soldiers over in England, those palace guards? I’ve been in England several times and I’m sorry, but it comes out from time to time. And I tried my best to get those guys to blink. I got right up in their face and looked at them and yelled, you know, everything I could do and they wouldn’t move. They wouldn’t move. They wouldn’t even blink. How in the world they do that? They refused to move. That’s the word *steko*. Don’t you dare! Don’t be caught off guard! Don’t you let this catch you off guard! Are you listening, Wayne? Yes, Sir, I’m listening. Don’t let anything catch you off guard. Keep your focus on Him. Keep you surrender to Him, no matter what comes your way because He is the essence of your freedom. Anything else is all other ground is what? Sinking sand. And don’t ever forget that. The Galatians had stepped over on to sinking sand.

So, first of all, stand firm on the truth that God set you free and God keeps you free. And only by yielding to Him, walking by faith can

you enjoy that freedom. But secondly, Paul continues and says “Do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.” This is slave talk here. He says, “Don’t be subject again to a yoke of slavery.” The verb “be subject again” is *enecho*. That means don’t allow yourself to be ensnared. Don’t allow yourselves to be held back. Don’t allow yourselves to be entangled. Young’s translation says, “Don’t allow yourself to be held fast again,” present passive. And, see, they’ve already done it once. But he says don’t you do this again. Don’t you do this again. There’s hope for you, but you need to come back to where you departed. Don’t do this again. Don’t get into the yoke of slavery again. Don’t let that choice to say “I’ve got to do something more for God” rob you of the freedom you already have in Him, of Him wanting to do something more through you. Don’t go back and live as slaves again to the Law. The Law will only put you in bondage to your flesh. Give up control of your life to the Lord Jesus.

Well, our priority, if we’re going to enjoy the freedom of allowing Christ to maintain our freedom, to keep our freedom, is to stand firm, not allowing the old mentality of the flesh to enslave us again. And that can go in any direction you want to take it. Don’t let the flesh rule your life, simply put. Let Jesus rule your life, period. How does Jesus rule your life? By using His Word as His authority in everything that we do. Say yes to Him. Say yes to Him and walk in the freedom God’s given. And remember this, remember He’s already told you, you will be persecuted for doing this. It’s not that people hate us; they hate the Jesus that lives in us. They hate the freedom that they see in us that they’re supposed to have, but have refused to enjoy. There will be hostility.

Well that’s the priority of keeping our freedom: that’s the main thing today. So if I run out of time, that’s my main point today, okay. But secondly he shows the peril of losing our freedom. Now, not positionally; you still have it in Christ. That’s not what he’s talking about. How we can experientially lose the freedom we have in Christ. When we choose to do things our way, we have just lost our freedom in Christ. We’re not under His control. We’re under our control and that’s not freedom. “Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you.” The “if” there is a third class condition “if.” In other words, it’s suppositional. He’s not picking on them right now. What he’s basically saying is to build a point. He says, “I’m trying to tell you something and you’ve already learned it, but if you choose to go your route, Christ has no benefit to you whatsoever if you receive circumcision.”

Now actually, there’s two ways you could look at this. One is, perhaps, that if you receive circumcision as the means of salvation. Many of the Judaizers, the false teachers, taught that Jesus was not in any way the way to salvation, the Mosaic Law was. And circumcision was the initiation into that law. And so, therefore, if you were circumcised you became a Jew; you’re now in the family of God, and then the law governs your righteous standing before Him as you obey it. Now he says, if you’re going that route, then obviously Christ is no benefit to you and you’re lost and He can’t help you a bit. You’ve chosen not to turn to Him.

But the more contextual meaning here is that if you’re a believer and you go back to the law in trying to live righteously, then again Christ is no benefit to you. Why do people want to talk about Christ if you can do it yourself? Christ is no benefit to you. Paul says if you buy into the fact that circumcision; and, by the way, he’s not down on circumcision. I mean, that’s not what he’s saying. He’s saying any kind of law that says you have to do this in order to have this, if you bow to that mentality whether it’s positional in salvation, if you’re lost, or whether or not it comes to holy living as a believer it’s, Christ is no benefit to you. You’re on your own.

The word for “benefit” is the word *opheleio*. It means of no advantage, of no help, of no profit. It’s a special word; “It doesn’t help me a bit.” Christ has no benefit at all, no advantage, no profit. He says in Gal 5:2, “Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you.” Then he says, “And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.” And this is the part that nobody ever tells you. The false teachers didn’t tell them. No man has ever been able to obey the whole law. And once you have received one part of it, you are now guilty if you do not obey all of it. You see what religion will do to you? It’ll make you a failure till Jesus comes back because you cannot do all that it demands.

James 2:10, “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point”—one point—“he’s become guilty of all of it.” James says even if you were good enough to keep the whole law for every day of your life until the last day you lived on this earth, and you broke one of them on that last day, you’re guilty of all of them, and everything that you’ve done that you thought was right is now wrong, and you’re a failure when you stand before God. Boy that’s a bummer. In other words, if you weren’t saved then you haven’t got a chance of being saved.

But then, let’s put this into context. The context is believers; if you are saved and you have just realized the futility of trying to obey a law that you can’t obey. I guarantee you, take five of them and try to obey them for five straight days, every one of them every day. I guarantee you’ll mess up in one of them. When you’ve messed up in one you’ve just shown yourself a failure. How many believers live in total failure? They’re always full of doubt. There is no joy in their life. What have they done? They’ve put themselves into bondage to a law they can’t even fulfill. It doesn’t matter if it’s the law in Scripture, or the law they put on themselves, you can’t even keep it.

I shared with you recently about that lady that said, “Brother Wayne, I had the worse day in my whole life last Thursday.” I said why? She said, “I didn’t have my quiet time.” What? You failed in the quiet time law? Well, then you’ve messed up in everything. You’re just a total failure. That’s what the law says, you see.

That's not the way it goes. Paul's point is, as it has been throughout the book, law and grace cannot peacefully coexist. "You have been severed from Christ," he says in Gal 5:4, "you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace." Whoa, what a verse! Man, I've heard this thing used and abused like you wouldn't believe. "You who are seeking to be justified by law" is the key to the whole verse. The term "justified" can be used two ways. It can be used for salvation, *dikaioo* is the word; or it can be used for holy living, one or the other. If you're a believer, seeking to be justified simply means seeking to live in such a way that God says yes, that's right. If you're not a believer then seeking to be justified would be for your salvation.

Now, this is what many of the Judaizers taught, as we said earlier, that to be saved is this way of the law. Romans 5:1, however, says, "Therefore, having been justified by," what? What are we justified by? "Faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." There's only one way to be saved. So, to me, that's not the context. You can go that route if you want to. It's certainly true. But the context is believers who have bought into the law. They sought to go the way of living holy before God. Saving grace, they had no trouble with; living grace, they completely did not understand. So justified, in the one who's a believer, has the meaning of living righteously and holy before God. Law never produces righteousness of any kind. And I'll tell you when we're going to discover that. It's when we stand before God one day and our deeds are judged either by wood, hay and stubble, or precious stones and it's going to be tested by fire. Then we're going to find out what we did after the flesh and then we're going to find out what we let Jesus do through our lives.

So first of all, he says if we have chosen the law or our flesh, "You have been severed from Christ." Now, what does that mean? The word "severed" is the word *katargeo*. It means to be disenfranchised. It means to be set aside, taken out of the sphere of the grace of Christ. That's a simple truth is all he's saying. He's not saying you're going to get kicked out of the family of God. That's not what he's talking about. Severed from Christ simply means that you're no longer under the sphere to where He can be of benefit to you, which came up previously. "You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law." Whether you're lost or whether you're saved, if you don't put Christ in the equation you've just been severed from the sphere of where He can do something in your life.

And then he says, "You have fallen from grace." Boy, I've heard that taught that a believer loses his salvation. Well, if that's the case, throw the rest of your Bible away, because God's a liar. When Jesus comes to live in you He never leaves you nor forsakes you. Isn't that what he said in Hebrews 5? And, by the way, how can you be born from above and be unborn from above? I wish somebody would explain that to me. When Christ comes into you, your spirit, His Spirit are united forever. That's what Romans 6 teaches us so beautifully. So he's not saying you lose your salvation. My goodness!

Ekpipto is the word, "to fall out of something that you were in." Now, I've done this before, but I want to make sure you're paying attention. These keys are in my pocket. I take them out. Now these keys originated in my pocket. That's where they came from. I've taken them out from it now. That's *ek*; that's a preposition in Greek that's very important. Eighty percent of Greek words have a preposition in front of it, and that tells you what it's talking about. Now, there's another word "from:" I put my keys up next to my pocket, take them away from it, big deal, they were never a part of my pocket to start with. You see the difference? Something that was in it; it's an origin there. Something was happening.

Now, what is he talking about? What's the context? The context was, he asked them earlier, "Where is that sense of blessing that you once had? You used to be living under grace. How did you fall out from under that sphere of living and choice that you used to make?" Talking about falling from grace, losing your salvation, that's nowhere in Galatians. That's not even the context of what he's saying. Galatians is written to believers who have lost that sense of blessing. They never rejected Christ as the means of their salvation. Good grief, they had that down! They could witness to fence post. But what they did, they rejected Christ as being the means of their sanctification. They thought now they could be perfected by law. That's what, back in 3:1-3, he talks about that.

Well, how many of us have walked in and out of the sphere of grace over and over again in our lives? Besides me, has anybody else done that since they've been saved? Now, do you understand what he's talking about? How in the world have you fallen out from under? And the word *pipto* for fallen is the word "stumble." How did you stumble out of that sphere of grace? What happened in your life that caused you to be over here? What's going on in your life that you're not living in the freedom you once had? Well, I'll tell you what, when you get out you know it real quickly.

My little grandson, Jonathan, hid, conveniently hid the paddle. He used it for a long time as a baseball bat and that was his way of getting it to where he could hide it. Well they found it the other day. His mama was in the room cleaning up with him and found that paddle. And she looked over at Jonathan and said, "Jonathan, you know what this is?" And Jonathan said, "The paddle." And then he said, before she could say anything else, "Sin hurts." Hey, at three years old, he's already figured it out. The Galatians couldn't figure it out. Sin hurts. You can lose your freedom in the Lord Jesus Christ. The moment we choose our flesh buddy, it's going to be painful. It's painful what happens to you, what happens to others.

And then finally, the picture of walking in the freedom of Christ. We've got the priority; we've got the peril of losing it; and now we

want to talk about the picture of walking in our freedom. Gal 5:5-6, “For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.” Now, I will not be able to fully get this one, so I’m going to have to pick it up next week. But let me get as far as I can. Paul makes a distinction. He says, “For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.” He puts that category of those who are living in the freedom. How do they live? They live by faith. That’s how they live. The same way they received the freedom, the same way they continue to walk, which means God’s Word has a very important role in their lives.

“For we through the Spirit, by faith.” Not “for we in the power of the flesh,” but “we through the Spirit, by faith.” The word “by” is the really that word *ek* again, out of faith. Everything that’s produced in us is produced out of faith, trusting Christ. And then he says, “through the Spirit,” and “out of faith.” “For we through the Spirit, by faith.” The believer who chooses to walk in his freedom operates out of faith. Galatians 2:20, and that’s the key verse to the whole epistle, “I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” Then he says, “And the life which I now live in the flesh [or this body] I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and delivered Himself up for me.” So Paul again makes this distinction.

Now, those believers who walked by faith, trusting only on Christ and His Word, have hope. And what is this hope centered in? “For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.” Now, anytime you see the word “hope” anywhere in Scripture it means for certainty. Never with God is it uncertain. The certainty of something. What is that certainty? The certainty of righteousness. Now, what’s he talking about? Ultimately he’s talking about the day we see Christ and when all righteousness will be revealed. But that’s not the context. The context is talking about when you do something out of the flesh—now listen to me carefully—you can number it, you can measure it. People who walk after the flesh are always interested in noses and numbers because they can see results. But people who walk by faith know that the results are there even if they can’t see them. Because if they walk by faith they believe in the certainty that righteousness is being done. And many times you can’t measure that.

Do you see the trap we’ve fallen into in the 21st century? Churches everywhere, church growth, the whole church growth movement is based on what man can do for God. It’s achieved ministry, measured by achieved results, and we have fallen right into that trap. But God says no sir, people that walk by faith, they believe that righteousness is happening. It doesn’t matter if the numbers decrease. It doesn’t matter if the money doesn’t go. It matters if whether or not you’re saying yes to God and you’re hearing from God. And people who live that way believe, and they expect, that righteousness is being done. I don’t know what that does to you, but that tremendously comforts my soul. I don’t have to see the results. God takes care of the results. That’s what he’s saying.

And these are two kinds of people in a church, aren’t they. They’re those who have to see the numbers and there are those who are willing to trust that when we obey God that whatever happens is right. Righteousness is being done. Then he says in Gal 5:6, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything.” Any external work when it comes to Christ Jesus means nothing. And when he says any external work he also means any external result means nothing in Him. “But faith working through love.”

Faith working through love. How do you know when something’s really being done by faith? How do you know? How do you know? I’ll tell you how. By the love in the relationships of the people who say they’re walking by faith. What did Jesus say? “By this shall all men know that you’re My disciples,” by the fact that you had 3,000 in services on Sunday. No. By the fact that your budget was \$100,000 over what was required. No. By the fact that what, that you what? Come on. That “you love one another.” How is it then, what’s the measure that God has? Not the numbers; the quality, not the quantity. When people learn to love each other they’re walking by faith, and faith working through love.

Well, the priority, keep your freedom. Keep your freedom. Don’t let anything take it away from you. The peril, you can lose it if by choosing to go back to your flesh, by having to do it your way instead of God’s way. And then the picture of what it really means to walk by faith. It’s saying yes to God and not trying to measure anything. Just say yes to God and walk on and walk on.

Galatians 5:7-10 Don’t Be Deceived

Well, we jump into Gal 5:7 today, and in verse 7 he starts talking about how easy it is to be deceived.

Galatians 5, we’re going to start today in Gal 5:7. But let me just catch you up a little bit with where we’re going and what we’ve looked at, and we’re building week by week. The apostle Paul—I love this man! I can’t wait to get to heaven. After I spend a million years with Jesus I want to spend some time with the apostle Paul—if it hasn’t dawned on you yet, I love his epistles. And one of the things I like about him, he was a sports fan. He loved the Olympic sport of running. Did you know that? He loved it. And it’s so apparent in his writings. And it’s no wonder. The Greek games, I mean, it was originated in his culture. They would come from city to city, specific cities, and they would run and they would practice and it was just sort of a contagious atmosphere.

In fact, Paul went to Corinth to make tents. That's where he met Aquila and Priscilla. And probably he went there to make those tents for the people who were coming in for the Isthmian games. Now, Athens had the Olympic games, and we know of those today. But Corinth sat on a little isthmus that connected northern and southern Greece and they would have the Isthmian games, and it was very similar. The athletes would come in from all around. But it's kind of an enigma as to how Paul was so infatuated with this sport of running.

First of all, he was a strict Jewish boy, which meant he grew up under certain rules and, buddy, you did this, you don't do that. You look left, you don't look right. But the Greek games, they were Greek. And to spare you a little bit of what I could tell you, they were not the most moral things in the world. And probably as a strict Jewish boy he was not allowed to go those Greek games when they would come into town. And so it kind of makes you wonder, how did he develop this love for the sport of running? And the only way I could figure is, it's the atmosphere that was created when those games would come to town. It's kind of like today when two football teams are playing. There's an atmosphere that's created, and a lot of people are caught up in it. They may never go to the game; they may not even like that kind of thing' but somehow the atmosphere catches you into it. It pulls you in, sucks you into it.

I remember when I was growing up in Virginia, was Blacksburg. That's where Virginia Tech is. On the other side was Lexington, Virginia, which is where VMI, Virginia Military Institute is. And every Thanksgiving Day Virginia Tech (VPI) would play Virginia Military Institute (VMI), the two military schools. They'd bring their military bands. And growing up as a child that captured our whole city. It was right in the time of the fall when the leaves had changed color and there was that cool Christmas, crispness in the air, you know of that fall weather, football time in Virginia. And VPI playing VMI; it just doesn't get any better than that. I didn't get to go, but I certainly was in the atmosphere of it. They'd have parades with the military bands. It was just awesome. And I'll never forget it; I was so excited I could hardly talk. And getting to that game, just being drawn into the atmosphere of what was going on. That's the only way I can figure that Paul developed such a love for that Olympic sport of running.

In fact, he uses that term "run" or "running" and "race" in so many of his epistles. In fact, he says in Philippians 2:16, "Holding fast the word of life so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain, nor toil in vain." And he uses that term of "run" to look at the task that he had before him and what he done with the Philippians. He uses the term of a runner and describes the whole race and the price that a runner pays when he gets into a race in 1 Corinthians 9:24. He says, "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you might win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way as not without aim. I box in such a way as not beating the air; but I buffet my body." Now, he doesn't say "I buffet my body," he says, "I buffet my body and make it my slave lest possibly after I have preached to others I myself should be disqualified." He beautifully brings out the price that a runner pays and he talks about that race and the prize at the end.

And then, we don't know if he wrote Hebrews or not. Somebody with a lot of Pauline theology did write it. The writer says in Hebrews 12:1, "Therefore, since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which does so easily entangle us and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." And he's used it in Galatians and you possibly missed it. It's in Galatians 2:2. And he says, "And it was because of a revelation that I went up and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation for fear that I might be running or had run in vain." So he pictures it as the Christian life, step after step after step after step, focused as a runner would be focused, looking forward to the reward that's at the end of that race.

Well, he's going to use that term again in our text today, except this time he's going to talk about the lanes that you run in and the track that you're on and how easily sometimes it can be that you get off of that track, that you somehow miss the point of why you're running the race. We've just come out of Gal 5:1-6. He talked about our freedom. He talked about how to keep our freedom. And he basically says in Gal 5:1 it's Christ who set you free. You didn't set yourself free, therefore, you stand on the fact that the One who set you free is the only One who can keep you free. In other words, when I choose to do things my way I put myself into bondage and no longer am I free. Freedom is never the right to do as you please; freedom is the power to do as you should. It's Christ living in our life.

And then in Gal 5:2-4 he talked about the peril of losing our freedom, and he says some pretty tough things. He talks about the fact in Gal 5:2, "Behold, I Paul say to you that if you received circumcision" which was the initiation into the Mosaic system, and once you received circumcision as a male that also affected your family. And from that point on you went to the Mosaic system and that was the road and the route to righteousness. And he says if you do that, if you go that route, "Christ is of no benefit to you." And then he says, "And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision that he under obligation to keep the whole law." If you're going to take that law then you're going to have to be accountable for the whole law, and no man has ever been able to do that, except the Lord Jesus the God man. He says in Gal 5:4, "You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law." He says, "You have fallen from grace," and he's not talking about a believer losing his salvation. That kind of theology is the worst hermeneutic I've ever heard. What he's saying is you have stumbled out of the sphere of the life-changing enabling grace of God when you choose to live life your way. The Galatians had done that. They had chosen religion over relationship with Jesus Christ.

And then in Gal 5:5-6 we hurriedly looked at this, “For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.” I hope you got that. The idea is, we are expectantly waiting on something if we’re walking by faith. And Paul delineates the fact that there are two different kinds of believers. There’s one believer that would rather be religious; there’s another believer who’d rather walk by faith, and he puts this category over here. He says if we walk by faith we are expecting something to happen. You know what that is? It’s the hope of righteousness. And I don’t know how else to say it any better than what he says, but I tell you what, what he’s saying, when we say yes to Jesus we expect the fact that righteousness just took place even though most of the time we don’t see the results we wanted to see. That’s the freedom that grace gives to us.

We’ll stand before Jesus one day, which is the ultimate hope of righteousness, and when we stand there all that we have done by faith will last and we’ll see it. But down here on this earth my main responsibility is not to produce anything. My main responsibility and yours is to say yes to Jesus. And when we say yes to Jesus we’re free from having to measure everything that we do. Only the world measures things. We can’t measure what God does. We say yes to Him and we trust the fact that righteousness is produced.

And then he documents that in the next verse. He says, “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything.” External works mean nothing to God. Any religious pagan can produce works that appear to be right. But he says what does mean something to God, and what makes it visible that we’re truly walking by faith, is “faith working through love.” And just to summarize that real quickly, you know what that means? What he’s saying is that God sees relationships as more important than ministry. I want to make sure we heard that. God sees relationships more important than ministry—what we call ministry. True ministry starts with relationships that love one another. Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that you’re My disciples,” not by the fact that you gave a \$100,000 last year, oh no; not by the fact that you came to church 17 times out of 19 times, opportunities; no! no! He said, “By this shall they know that you’re My disciples, by the fact that you do,” what? “That you love one another.” And that’s where he’s headed in Galatians 5 and 6. He’s going to show us what it looks like when you love one another. See, religion produces external works. God says that doesn’t impress Me. What impresses Me is the internal love you have for one another, the oneness of the body of Christ.

Well, we jump into Gal 5:7 today, and in Gal 5:7 he starts talking about how easy it is to be deceived. Galatians 5:7 says, “You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?” Now the first thing that he talks about deception—and there are three things we need to learn about deception—first of all, it happens when you least expect it. It happens when you least expect it. “You were running well.” Nobody expects to be deceived when they’re running well. He says, “Who hindered you from obeying the truth?” Now there are two things that you have to observe immediately. And that first one is, runners who run well are runners who run on the right track. I mean, you can’t be someplace else in a race and count on the race that’s going on over here. You’ve got to be on the right track and you’ve got to be in the right lane. And so runners who run well are on the right track. And, you see, the Galatians had once been running well. That’s why he has to ask them where’s that sense of blessing that you once had?

Secondly, they were obeying the rules of running. I’ve never been in any athletic contest that didn’t have rules, and if you broke the rules you paid the price. You’re out of the contest. Well, what are the rules of this runner, on this race that Paul uses as an analogy of the Christian life? It’s to walk by faith. You were running by faith. You were living by faith. You were doing well. You were obeying the rules. And so what he pictures is a church that’s living like it ought to live. The love was there, the relationships were there. Everything was working right. They were in a pace. I love that, when you watch a runner and he gets into that zone, and, son, it’s just like clockwork. It’s beautiful. I mean, his legs moving, his arms moving, his focus is dead ahead. It’s beautiful to watch. And Paul says suddenly something happened. What happened? He says, “Who hindered you, who hindered you from obeying the truth?”

The word “hindered” there is the word *anakopto*. It means who cut in on you? Who cut in on you? The first thing that comes to my mind is a telephone conversation and somebody cuts in on what you’re doing. That’s really not where he’s headed. When I ran track, we went over and ran against VMI. And VMI had a field house shaped like a football. And on each end of it they had a turn, of course, they had a tunnel. And when you ran in that track you could be in first place right in your lane. You’re just moving, you’re moving, you’re moving and you go into that tunnel. Conveniently every time that we would run against them, conveniently for them, the lights were out in that tunnel. I guess the light bulbs just lasted until we ran them, because every time we’d run there the lights were out. And you’d go into that tunnel pitch black and you’d just be running in your lane. The next thing you know you’re banging up against the wall. Who hindered you? Who cut in on you? Who cut in on your race and kept you from doing as God would have you to do? Who hindered you, hindered you? That’s the word “hindered.”

The word “who” there is singular and very important. Paul knows that somebody’s initiating this whole thing. And Paul wants to know who it is. Do you realize any time you have a church this size and you have people going one direction and people going another direction, if the people that are going the wrong direction, living after the flesh, living religious lives, mechanical and judgmental, somebody started that? Somebody started that and Paul is interested in who it is. Who is it? Who is it? Who started this whole thing? If you’ll track it back it usually goes back to one person. It’s amazing. Well, he wants to know who it is. He doesn’t evidently know. He says, “You were running well; who hindered you?” And what did they stop them from doing? He said, “From obeying the truth.” See, that’s your walk, that’s your walk, obeying the truth. The word “obeying” is the word *peitho*. *Peitho* means to be persuaded. Who

hindered you from being persuaded by every word and every verse in God's Word? Who hindered you from doing that? Who ever told you that there was anything other than God's Word and God's will in your life? Who hindered you from surrendering to Him?

Well, Paul tells who it wasn't. He says in Gal 5:8, "This persuasion did not come from Him who called you." In other words, don't blame God for it. God didn't have anything to do with it. The flesh is what's rampant here now. There's been a choice that's been made. And it's interesting he uses that term "persuasion" again. In other words, on this, when you're running well and you're in the right lane and you're on the right track you're being persuaded by God's word, which is changing your behavior. But now he uses it again in a negative sense. Now they've been persuaded by something else which has now changed their behavior and their behavior over here doesn't match their behavior that used to be over here. Who has cut in on your life? "This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you." Of course, what was deceiving the Galatians was that old religious mindset. "Jesus is fine for saving grace. Yes sir, He'll save you, but living grace, oh no, no, no. You've got to go back to the law now and there's rules and regulations and you have to do what you do to measure up." Who told you that? Who came across that way? What can we do that Christ has not already done? He's already fulfilled the law. There's nothing we can do.

So deception happens when you least expect it. Maybe it happens in the mundane boring things of life. Maybe it happens when you go through a car wash and you don't handle it right. And some of those times happen in our lives and we don't handle them right. And because of that somebody comes along and fuels our flesh and we buy into it and we go the other route and now we've been hindered from walking our race. So deception happens when you least expect it. I wonder this morning how many, how many of us in here are already deceived and don't even know it. We don't even know it.

Secondly, deception spreads like wildfire. The moment that the deception gets into the body of Christ, whether it's a Sunday School class, a family, or even a church, when it happens that way it's like a virus, a fast working virus. My wife and I had the opportunity to be with Cadence International which works with the military. And we were over in Switzerland. Well, while we were there we ministered to the military. And I want to tell you, God came down in that place. But there was a group coming from Italy and on the bus some kid caught a virus, and it spread to the next one, to the next one, to the next one, to the next one, and by the time they got there the whole bus, it was very uncomfortable trip because it was a stomach virus. And they got there—we were staying on the second floor—and they put all those sick people on the second floor. And every day I was worried to death, I'm going to get sick. I'm going to get sick. And I was sitting there that next morning talking to one of the adults and all of a sudden I just noticed he didn't say anything. And I looked up at him and his lips were pale. You know what happens when somebody's nauseous and they're sick? And that virus moved like you wouldn't believe, fast moving.

That's exactly the way it is when somebody takes a religious mindset and brings it into the church. It's like a virus. It's like a cancer in the body of Christ and it spreads like wildfire. He says in Gal 5:9, "A little leaven leavens the whole lump." That word for "leaven" is the word *zumi*. *Zumi* means yeast. You know what yeast is. You put it in things to cause it to ferment, rot. But you see that yeast causes something to ferment. It changes; as a matter of fact, I looked it up. It says it's a living organism that causes fermentation. It says it changes chemically whatever it's put into. Something had changed the chemistry of the body of Christ in southern Galatia. And what had happened was grace was no longer taught. Religion and law and works of the flesh became the predominate thing and it was like a cancer eating up the body of Christ in southern Galatia. "A little leaven" he says "leavens the whole lump."

Now Paul's used that other places. He used it in 1 Corinthians 5:6, "Your boasting is not good, you do not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough." Leaven here in 1 Corinthians 5 is a picture of sin that I just read. It's usually used in a negative sense. It's used the same way in Galatians. However, it's used in a very positive way in Matthew 13:33. Jesus used it. It says, "He spoke another parable to them, the kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of meal until it was all leavened." So the emphasis of leaven is the context. But the emphasis is the persuasive power that leaven has once you interject it into any substance. You take anybody that comes out of a religious background—and many people in this area come from a religious background. All they know is works. All they know is that, and they come into receive Jesus as saving grace, they come to know Christ as their Savior—but then they have a deprogramming that has to go on in the mind. Because that old religious mindset, if you're not careful, will drag right into your Christianity and it's like a leaven.

It's like a virus and it sickens the whole body of Christ because there is no joy, there is no blessing with law. Law can never produce what it demands. That's why Jesus had to come and produce it by His life, and now He lives in us to live through us what the law requires. Remember back in 1:6 when Paul said, "I am amazed at how quickly you deserted Him who called you." You know, it's just amazing how a virus, it's a quick taking, quick infecting virus. I wonder how strong the virus is in our own church. I wonder how strong it is. It's very subtle because it comes across sincere. It may have God's name all over it, but God hasn't got a thing to do with it. I wonder how strong it is right here.

Let me ask you a question. How are you affecting others? Are you affecting them toward the message of God's grace, or are you affecting them towards the message of law and all of its legalism that goes with it? There was a mainline denomination several years ago that a group of ladies decided that they didn't like the fact that the gender for God is male or masculine. So they decided

to change the name of God and put it in the feminine. And they changed His name to Sophia. And in this mainline denomination they just laughed at that. Oh, good grief, it's just some ladies that are upset again. And they didn't pay attention to it. But then last year in the headlines of our countries papers there almost became such a divisive thing it almost split a denomination. Why? Because it started off as a little tiny virus, and nobody paid any attention to it, and it spread like wildfire and then it became a major denominational thing that they had to deal with. That's what deception will do. That's how quickly it spreads. That's how quickly it spreads.

Well, finally, judgment awaits those who deceive. I tell you what, that comforts me. The people that are willfully deceptive are going to pay, and God says their judgment is on its way. And I just want to say this real quickly, because we're kind of running short, but I want to ask you this. Do you understand that there are two kinds of deception? There's a deceiver by a person who simply deceives by error, and then there's a deceptive teacher who knows exactly what he's doing, and that's in Galatians. This is a man that says Jesus is never going to be enough; it's law or it's nothing. And this is the one he's talking about in Gal 5:10: "I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you shall bear his judgment."

And if you're here today and you're willfully deceiving anybody in the body of Christ, it ought to put the fear of God in your heart; because he says "you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is." Paul did not know who this guy was that had started this whole mess in the churches in southern Galatia. And I love what he says in the first part of the verse, "I have confidence in you." No, he doesn't have confidence in them. Well, that's what it says! No, it doesn't. Keep reading it. "In the" who? "In the Lord." His confidence is not in people. His confidence is in Christ who lives in people. And he says if you have once tasted of what it means to run the race the right way, and if you've become deceived, I have confidence of that in the Lord He's going to bring you back to truth. But then he shifts gears. And he says that man who deception, who's full of deception and willfully is deceiving the body, he will bear his judgment.

I'll tell you what, as a young pastor I had all kinds of wrong doctrine. I just loved the Lord. You're the most vulnerable when you're the most hungry. You're the most vulnerable when you're the most hungry. But God sent someone to come along side me and straighten me out. You see, God knew my heart. I didn't want to be deceived, and God takes care of people who want to walk by faith that love Him. But those people who are willfully deceptive, I'm telling you folks, they're coming if they're not already here. But God said don't you worry about them, keep preaching the truth. I'll take care of them. They will bear their judgment. Just like the false teachers in 2 Peter 2 when he says they bring swift destruction upon themselves. That ought to be a warning to anybody who's willing deceptive in the body of Christ.

The rest of us, if we're teaching wrong doctrine I'll guarantee you, Priscilla and Aquila will come along side you. They got a hold of Apollos and straightened him out. Spiros got a hold of me and straightened me out. We're going to have elders, and I guarantee you when we see doctrine that's wrong, it will be confronted because we can do that. That's what the body's all about. But a willfully deceptive teacher doesn't know Christ, and they're coming into churches. It used to be they would meet and go out and be persecuted. Not anymore. The devil's joined the church and there's a lot of people who come in with one purpose in mind, to deceive the body of Christ.

Well, I was over in Texas a few years ago. And I was in a group of teachers. This one guy asked me a question, "What would you do if you had a teacher that was teaching the Word, but losing members and the members in his class said, well, if you'd be more topical and we could have some more fun, you could grow the class. And he gives up teaching the Word to do that, what would you say about that?" Well, he shouldn't have asked me. I said, "He'll stand before a holy God and answer for it. We're not responsible for how many people like to have their felt needs met. They don't even know what their real needs are. We're responsible to God to teach His Word inerrant, inspired and infallible." We left the meeting; I didn't know that he was talking about himself. Several weeks later I got an email. He said, "I was ashamed to tell you it was me that I was talking about." And he said, "Yes, my class doubled, but it's total fluff." And he said, "I've been miserable ever since I compromised my conviction." He said, "I've gone back to what God's taught me." And he said, "I'll tell you what, we don't have as many. But we've got the sweetness of the Spirit of God like I have never seen before. Thank you, because I know one day you helped me when I stand before a holy God."

You see, we're living in the day of "make me feel better or I'll go to another church." That's bologna! God's culling the body, folks. It's in the last days. And He's pulling His remnant forward. And those people that love God will walk and run the race will be the people that you will want to run to when the hard times come. They're the ones that'll hold you up. They stand solid.

Galatians 5:11-17 Freedom – The Power to Do as You Should

Freedom is never the right to do as you please, and you're going to see that today. He'll address that. But freedom is the power to do as you should. When I allow Jesus and His Word to control my life, then it's no longer me, it's Jesus living in me.

Turn to Galatians 5. We're going to pick up today in Gal 5:11. The apostle Paul has been talking about freedom. Now, what is

freedom? Freedom is never the right to do as you please, and you're going to see that today. He'll address that. But freedom is the power to do as you should. When I allow Jesus and His Word to control my life, then it's no longer me, it's Jesus living in me. I am not free unless it's Him. If it's me I am bound; I'm a slave. If it's Him He's free in me and that's what freedom is all about, the freedom to be what God wants us to be. When we stop allowing the Word of God to change our lives—now listen to what I'm saying—when we stop allowing the Word of God to dictate to us what our behavior ought to be, when we stop allowing the Word of God to address the individual circumstances of our life, situation by situation and letting it dictate how we are to act, when we stop doing that and many times in our lives we choose not to go that route. All of us have been there. Then the freedom that we have, the freedom to be what God says we ought to be, ceases at that moment. We're no longer free. We're now bound again, because we can't be in our power what God tells us we ought to be without the Word of God which ought to be renewing our minds everyday of our life.

It's amazing to me how the Word of God is not a map, it's a mirror. Do you find that true? Every time I get into it you know what I see? I see lousy Wayne, but I see all awesome Jesus; and I see where I need to deal with things in my life. If I'm not in the Word I don't see that. When I'm not in the Word, I see lousy other people. But when I'm in the Word, I see lousy me. It's amazing isn't it? If you're not in the Word of God you've got a finger pointing at somebody. But if you're in the Word of God, buddy, you're looking at you and God's looking at you, and that's what it's all about.

But when that stops happening, deception comes among us. And I want to say something to you. I doesn't matter what age we are, it doesn't matter what service I say this in; it's true everywhere. No matter what, no matter, if you're not in the Word of God you're already deceived and don't even know it. That's how quickly deception moves upon people that will not stay in the Word of God. Deception is the major thrust of the devil in our world today. There's no other way he can touch us. We're in Christ. We're hidden in Christ who is in God. He's beneath us, above us, behind us and in front of us and lives in us. How's he going to touch me? But what he can do is deceive the way I think. And if he can get my mind, then he can cause my behavior to be something that is not honoring to God. The basic theme of God's Word—and if we stay in the Word we see it—is Christ, from Genesis to Revelation, and the grace that is offered to us in Him.

Now I know many of you probably are thinking I don't know what I don't know. I'm guessing. Many people probably think I talk about grace too much. Well, here's my answer to that. There's nothing else to talk about, period. As a matter of fact, the more I understand about grace, the more I realize I don't understand about it. You see, what grace is, it's the well. It's the well, folks. Every truth in Scripture flows out of the well of what grace is. If you don't know this message of living grace—you may know saving grace; that'll help you certainly when you get into the kingdom—but if you don't know living grace everything that we're doing is of the flesh. We're already deceived and that's why we're miserable. The freedom comes when you understand what Paul is trying to teach the Galatian believers.

Well, the believers of Galatia had at one time responded properly to God's Word. They had lived under this grace. They had had a love for each other. They had a sense of blessing that was awesome. That's why Paul had to ask them, "Where did that sense of blessing go that you once had?" In Gal 5:7 he says, "You were running well." You know what that means? That means the track that you were running on was the right track. It means that the way in which they were running was the right way. It also means that the power that enabled them in that race was of Him, not of them. And so they were doing it right. They were doing it right. And the apostle Paul tells them that "You were doing it. You were running well." They were not living after the flesh. Oh, no! They were understanding and enjoying the freedom they had in Christ.

But something happened. And he says in the last part of Gal 5:7, "Who hindered you from obeying the truth?" The word "who" there is singular and very important to the text, because what he's talking about is some individual started this whole thing. Have you ever noticed how, how gossip can start? You ever played that little game gossip? You start off with something and you go around the room and you just see how it ends up at the end of it. But somebody had to start it. Somebody had to start it. And he said, "Who is it that hindered you?"

The teaching of the false teachers had God's name all over it. Isn't that amazing how they hide behind God's name? They hide behind the name of Jesus, but they had error to tell you. You see, they mixed the two together when you're not looking, they pick up the error and you think it's the truth. He says in Gal 5:8, "This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you." In other words, it may have had God's name all over it, but God had nothing at all to do with it. And then Paul shows that when one believer strays from the truth, just takes one, that's all it takes. It can be one person in a family. It can be one person in a church. It doesn't matter. It shows how it spreads like a virus. It spreads like a virus.

He says, "A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough." And he uses the term "leaven" to show the persuasive power of how sin and error can get into the body. Leaven is a very persuasive instrument. In fact, it can be used good, it can be used bad. Jesus used it in a good way. But it can be used, it's persuasive power that it has, it's like a cancer. It influences everything around it. But Paul is persuaded that God will bring them back to truth, that they'll come back to what they used to understand. They used to live the right

way, and Paul's persuaded that somehow God's going to bring them back.

But he says in Gal 5:10, "I have confidence in you" not really in them, "in the Lord." He has confidence in the Lord, "that they will adopt no other view." But then he gives a stern warning to those people who are bringing that religious flesh mindset into the church, he gives a warning. He says, "But the one who is disturbing you shall bear his judgment whoever he is." There's a special judgment for people that bring the body of Christ back to error. There's a special judgment. As a matter of fact, it ought to put a fear in every one of our hearts that we don't communicate flesh and works, that we communicate grace and what God can do in our life.

Well, he goes back now again to that subject of freedom. Actually, he's been talking about it all along. But now he's going to address it one more time. There are several things I want you to see about the freedom that we have in Christ, that Paul wants us to see. I want you to see, too, several things. I'm not going to finish the message, so we'll just go and see how far I can get. Next time, same place, same song, third verse. But three things I want you to see about this freedom that we have in Christ Jesus.

First of all, I want you to see the frustration of this freedom, the frustration of our freedom. Now these evil men that came in and deceived the Galatian people, disguised themselves under the name of God. Not only did they slander the message of grace; now listen to me, they slandered the messenger who preached that message. Now that's interesting to me. One of the ways to get a man's message taken away is to slander the man, and they were good at this. And it says in Gal 5:11, "But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished."

Now, it appears in this verse that these false teachers had gone around and they'd accused Paul of preaching circumcision, of preaching the law. He says, "If I still preach circumcision," now why would he be addressing that if that had not been said about him? The false teachers were probably saying, well, he preaches grace over to that crowd, but when he gets to this crowd he preaches circumcision, so he's got a confusing message. He's not really an apostle. He doesn't know what he's talking about. You see, the false teachers evidently were trying to discredit the man. So Paul answers with a logic in two ways that nobody can dispute. First of all he says, "But if I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted?"

So, first of all, the very fact that he was being persecuted showed that the accusation was false. It was stupidity for them to bring this up to start with. Remember a few verses back it said the children of the bond woman will persecute the children of the free woman. Well, the children of the bond woman are those who preach law. They preach circumcision. These were the people he's dealing with here. And they were not being persecuted. That was very acceptable to everybody. Preach what a man can do for God. Religion is much more acceptable than Christianity because Christianity, a person has to realize the futility of doing anything in his flesh. So he says, "The ones who are being persecuted are not the ones preaching circumcision, but the ones preaching against circumcision." So Paul shows how stupid it is for anybody to accuse him of preaching circumcision and giving a mixed signal as to what grace is all about.

But the second thing he says is much, much more profound. "But if I still preach circumcision why am I still persecuted?" Then watch what he says. "Then," in other words, if I'm still preaching circumcision, "the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished." Do you see what he's saying? If I preach circumcision the message of the cross, the message of grace is completely abolished. You don't have a message anymore. It has no affect. Why? Because you can't add external works to grace. You can't do that. You can't add law to grace. Paul preached a message of the cross. The cross eliminates all human works. This is why people don't like it. This is why people hate this message. It, including circumcision, it completely eradicates any human effort to do anything to please God other than to bow before Him. Remember back in Gal 5:6 he said circumcision or uncircumcision means nothing to God. God doesn't care. He's not talking about the outward; He's talking about the inward. And Paul said I couldn't be preaching circumcision because if I did I would abolish the message of the cross.

What Christ did for us on the cross, do you understand it? This is so heavy on my heart that you see what he's talking about. When you look at the cross the only reason Jesus had to come and die on the cross was because men could not attain the standard that God required. God loved mankind, but sin automatically crippled him. Jesus had to become a man to do what men could not do. And so the cross, when you look at it, it shames all of our religious efforts to please Him. It shames all of our fleshly efforts to please Him.

You know what we're trying to add to grace today? We're trying to add baptism, some people are. They're just saying if you're not water baptized then you can't be saved. What? You see, you'd have to throw the book of Galatians out of your Bible. That's an external work. What God does for us and what He did for us on the cross is completely internal and it's something we have to trust Him to do what we cannot do in our own life. "If you could," Paul says, "if you could add law to grace then you would abolish the message of the cross." It would be abolished. The way to frustrate your Christian walk is to try to add law to anything that you're doing under grace.

You ever been under the "quiet time" law? If you don't get up at 4:00 in the morning and have your quiet time you're not spiritual. Anybody been under that law? I've been there. Or have you been under the witnessing law? If you don't pass out 17 tracts a day you don't love Jesus. Have you been under the church attendance law, that if you don't come a certain amount of times then you

don't measure up? You see, any time you start, you can add your own laws to it and you can get up under your own laws, but you've just abolished the message of the cross.

The cross says to all mankind, you can't save yourself. You can't do anything to measure up to what I require; therefore, I love you enough that I'm going to come and I'm going to measure up for you as a man, the God-man. I'm going to go to the cross. I'm going to take upon Myself the sin debt that you could have never paid and then I'm going to open the door. I'm going to become the shepherd, the door that if you'll receive Me you can have a relationship with the Father. I'll come to live in you to do through you what you could never do in a million years. That's the message of the cross. But oh, how man hates the message of the cross.

Paul says it's a stumbling block. He says the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished. Why is it a stumbling block? I'll tell you. I've already really told you. As a matter of fact he says that it's also in 1 Corinthians 1:23. "But we preach Christ crucified," he says over there to the Corinthians, "to Jews a stumbling block." Why would it be a stumbling block to the Jews? Because they think that they're already in; they're descendants of Abraham, and therefore the Mosaic Law is their means of righteousness. They don't see themselves as being lost. And when Jesus came, their idea of the Messiah was He's going to kick the Gentiles out and set up His earthly kingdom. What do you mean He came and died on a cross? They completely obliterate Isaiah 53. They try to make that a nation, instead of a person, the Lord Jesus, who had to be wounded for our transgressions. It's a stumbling block to them. It throws a ringer right in the middle of everything that they've been trying to say. It blows away, because if you've rejected Jesus you've rejected the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament. But also he says to the Gentiles, "It's foolishness." Why? Because, see, we come out of that Gentile area. To Gentiles is foolishness, because what do you mean, man? He's not much of a man if He came down here and couldn't do anything else but get Himself killed. It's foolishness to the mindset that doesn't understand himself to be a sinner born from Adam.

Well, the message of the cross defies all of man's effort to earn a right standing with God, to measure up to what it requires. So Paul says, "If I preach circumcision that doesn't make any sense. You're still persecuting me, so I must not be preaching it. Or if I was I'd obliterate my whole message." The message of the cross robs a man of any ability to do anything that impresses God. Boy, that's a great truth, isn't it? You say, "I can do a few things that impress God." You can? Well, bless your heart. I remember when I got saved finally, I was on my knees and I said, "God, why don't You show me what You see about me." And God showed me the filth of my flesh. I cried for hours when I realized what a filthy creature I am because of the sin of Adam. And when I cried out to Him that day the sky got bluer and the grass got greener. And all of a sudden something had happened to me. I was saved! That's what the cross does for a person.

Isn't it amazing; a person gets saved and forgets every bit of that? He now thinks he can get in a committee and come up with his own way of how to impress God, and that's exactly what religion does to man. It deceives him! It deceives him! There's nothing I can do. There's nothing you can do.

Paul is so frustrated. He says in Gal 5:12, "Would that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves." If you've studied this you know where I'm headed. "Those who are troubling you" is an old word. It has to do with unsettling somebody. And the word-picture it draws for you is when you're at home, kicked back in your big old chair, got your loose old clothes on that if anybody saw you, they'd put you in jail. And you just are at home. I love to be kicked back in my chair. I'm at rest. Why? I'm at home. Shut the door, lock the door. And isn't it wonderful just to be at home at rest? That's the word. And the word "trouble" means to drive you out from under that and make you feel unsettled. You see the word-picture? He's saying that when error gets into your life, man, when you're living under grace you're just walking in the rest God has for you. Hebrews talks about in chapter 4, the rest that remains for the people of God. And you live in that untroubled state because you're so surrounded in the presence of Christ. The world can just be doing all kinds of things, but you're okay because you're at home. You're living in your freedom that you have in Jesus Christ. But when error gets in, it drives you out and unsettles your life.

Let me ask you a question. How many of you are unsettled this morning and you wonder why? "Well, it's this, it's that." No, it's not. There's only one thing that could unsettle your life, only one thing. You know what that is? When you choose to do it your way instead of doing it God's way. That's the only thing that can unsettle you. When you're walking in the grace of Christ you're at rest, you're at peace. You're walking in the freedom that is given to you.

Well, he said, "Would those that are troubling you, that are disturbing you, that are unsettling your whole life with this error," he says, "would that they even mutilate themselves." And that word "mutilate" means to cut off, especially a member of the body. What he's saying is, would that they castrate themselves. You could read that very literally that way. There was a cult at that time called the cult of Cybele. She was a popular nature goddess. Many of the devout males would go out and castrate themselves as an act of religious devotion to this goddess. In fact, the priests of that cult that was right in this area where he was writing to, the priests would make themselves eunuchs by castrating themselves as an act of devotion. And what many people think that Paul is saying here is, if you think circumcision is that important, then why don't you just go out and commit the supreme act of devotion and castrate yourself? That's exactly the literal of what many people think he's saying.

Now personally, I don't; because there's another side to this. There's another way of looking at it. "Why don't you just disappear?" I wish those people had gotten into the body of Christ and are causing so much error and so much disturbance, unsettling God's people. It's almost as if to me he's saying I wish they would just cut themselves out of the body of Christ. I wish they would go away. I wish they would disappear.

I understand that. Over the years of being a pastor—I've been in the ministry 40 years—and in the years I've been in the ministry many times I have prayed "O God, get rid of these 10 people. I believe if we could get rid of these 10 people we could have a revival." And every time God just messes up. He says, "No, I've put them in your life to make you live what you tell others they ought to experience." Oh, brother! I don't like that. That's a bummer.

The frustration to our freedom, folks, comes when you add any kind of law to grace. That's what going to unsettle your life. It's going to get you out from under your rest. You can't trust God anymore. Now it's up to you. How many times I've tried to take the reins of my own life. You can't do that. And how many times do we have to fail before God says, "Now you just trust Me. I'll take it from here"?

Well the frustration of our freedom. But then the second thing; oh, man this gets so good, the expression of our freedom. What is the expression? I mean, if we're walking in the freedom of God, what is the expression of that into our lives? Always, it'll never fail ever, the expression of our freedom in Christ—if we're truly walking in it, if we're truly not unsettled, we're settled, we're at rest, we're at home under grace—the expression will be seen in the way that we treat one another, always, always. "Oh, but brother Wayne, I've got some great suggestions." That's fine. How are you treating others in the body of Christ?

Gal 5:13, "For you were called to freedom, brethren," freedom being the power to do as you should in Christ, Christ living in you. "Only, do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement; You shall love your neighbor as yourself. But if you divide and devour one another, take care that you're not consumed by one another."

Now the central theme of those three verses is the last statement in Gal 5:13 when he says, "through love serve one another." When one is living in the freedom that God gives—see, God is love—love will become the divine motivator in his life. We'll see later on that this love is only produced by the Holy Spirit. You can't come up with this kind of love. Our love is conditional. His love is unconditional. You can't produce it. We love you if. He just loves you. You see, that's the difference, it's unconditional.

Well, he says in Gal 5:22, just to show you, he says, "But the fruit," that which is produced by the Spirit, "of the Spirit is love." Only the Spirit of God, only when we're walking in our freedom, yielded to Christ and yielded to His Word do we experience what that freedom is all about, which is a love that motivates our life. The way Christ living in and through us is seen by others is in the love that His Spirit produces. Now again, Christ is God, Christ is love, He becomes a divine motivator of our life.

Gal 5:13 begins with the words "For you were called." Now, the word for "called" there is *isek kaleo*. It means to be called out from under something, out from; you're in over here but you're called over to be in over here. It means to be called out from among something. It has the idea of an invitation, a summons, of "I'm beckoning you. I'm calling you. I'm not making you; I'm inviting you to come out of what you're in over here." Paul is reminding them of their salvation. He's reminding them that they were not believers because of some self effort. They weren't seekers. Nobody seeks after God, Isaiah said, except believers. But he says God was seeking you and He sent you an invitation. That invitation is John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." And one day that invitation came to them and they understood it and received it and He called them out from being bond, in bondage to themselves over into being in the freedom that God offers them in their life.

David had a tough, tough life. You talk about a man who lived in bondage, but he had a dear wife that loved him unconditionally. God was working in her life, and one day the invitation somehow, either through her or somebody, got to his doorstep. God so loved the world, God so loved David, and he received that invitation and he came out from under that old bondage to his flesh all of those years and walked into the freedom now of what Christ is doing in his life. And I love it when I preach. He's sitting there. He's hanging on every single word. He can't wait to hear the next word. He didn't have it for years of his life. It's almost like he wants to take notes and write down. He's so hungry. He came out of bondage. He was invited to come over into freedom. That's what Christianity is all about.

So Paul reminds them of that. He says, "For you are called to freedom, brethren." The word "to" is the word *epi*, and it's a purpose word. You were called out of this, for the purpose of being free in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why we're saved. That's what salvation is all about. The implication again, you're called out of bondage for the purpose of freedom. You once lived under the controlling condemning power of the law where your flesh dominated you. But now you have been called into a lifestyle that's free. You're free from yourself. You're free from condemnation. You're free from the law. You're free to be what God wants you to be.

And then Paul defines what this freedom is. But I've been saying it's not the right to do as you please, but the power to do as you

should. Look at this. "For you are called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh." Note that phrase: "Do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh." There's no verb there. It's written as if there's a verb. It's a statement. And when they take the verb out of it, it means don't ever forget this. Don't ever forget this. This is a priority. Don't ever forget this. You "do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh." You see, freedom, again, is not the right to do as you please; it's not the right to give an opportunity to your flesh.

I don't have a right to give my flesh an opportunity. I don't have a, "but I don't like this, Lord, and I'm going to go tell that person I don't like it," and God says "You're going to do what?" You don't have a right. Listen to what I'm saying. You don't have rights to ever give your flesh an opportunity. That's what freedom is. Freedom is not the right to do as you please. But there's a lot of people haven't figured that out yet in the church. Gal 5:13: "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh." Our freedom in Christ gives us no right, it gives us no right.

That bothers me. I'm 6'7". I weigh 255 pounds. "I can help you, Lord." I used to think, "Lord, just let me take them outside at the back of the church. I guarantee you if I don't come back in I'm going to hurt somebody before we get there. I believe I can handle it." And God says, "No way, son, you can't ever have the right to give your flesh an opportunity." I do these camps every year, and I love young people. Every year we have new churches. You know what the biggest thing we have to deal with those new people? They hear we're talking about grace, but we have rules at camp. And they get there and they say "What, rules! I thought this was a grace camp." And it takes us an hour to explain to them that grace does not mean the license to do what you want to do. Grace is freedom, the power to be what you ought to be.

Well, what should be the motivation of all that we do? What should be our motivation? We don't give the flesh an opportunity. He says, "But through love serve one another." Do you realize that's what freedom is? That's what it looks like when it's working. In all of our relationships we have a divine mandate to allow His love to be produced in our lives and for others to see it, for others to experience it. He says, "Through love serve one another." The word "through" there is the word *dia*. *Dia* means by the means of, by the means of love. There's only one way to serve and it's by the means of love. And a definite article is used there: "*dia* love," and which means it makes it very specific. And what he's saying the love of the Lord Jesus it's only produced by His Holy Spirit in the life of a yielded believer that that love dictate how you serve one another. Through the love serve one another. Isn't it interesting that religion, all religions, have some type of service? And so that serving word would be kind of interesting to them. See, under religion you're told to serve; under Christianity you're motivated serve. It's a little different then.

But the word "serve" that's used here is *douleuo*. *Douleuo* is not a word for servant like you'd normally see. This is the word for slave. Now look what he's saying. A slave is obligated to serve. Oh, man, put these two things together. The love that the Spirit of God produces in you and produces in me is an obligation, it gives us an obligation. It obligates. It motivates and it obligates us to serve one another. So you see, a believer who says "I want you to serve me," what does that tell you about his walk? He's not walking in the freedom that God has given to him. He's chosen bondage. He wants to be served rather than let me be a servant to you.

Isn't it interesting how many times in churches you have to just beat people over the head to serve? Have you ever noticed that? "Well, you've never asked me to serve so I'm just not going to do anything." Oh me, no, no, no. The obligation and the motivation to serve is something He does, not something the preacher does. You can't produce this. You cannot program this. That's when the gifts of the Spirit begin to operate, the service gifts in the body of Christ. You begin to see mercy gifts surface. You begin to see the gifts of serving. You begin to see the gifts of exhortation. You begin to see the gifts of giving. You begin to see the gifts of preaching and teaching and you begin to see the body come alive because where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, there is freedom. The gifts can operate only when people are walking in the freedom that God says is ours in Christ Jesus. It motivates us and it obligates us.

Well, His love produced in the lives of those who walk by faith becomes a divine motivator and a divine obligator that these people serve and love one another. It is then that we are free. It is then that we're free. So the frustration of our freedom is when we try to add law to grace. You can't add law to grace. And that doesn't mean there's not rules in the Christian life. That doesn't mean we don't obey the Word of God. What I'm saying is we don't do what we do in order to measure up. Jesus measured up for us. But not only is the frustration of our freedom that, but the expression of our freedom is when we want to love others. Our serving others is what expresses this, this wonderful freedom in which we've chosen to walk.

But the final thing I want to share today, I have another one but I'll wait till next time, is the culmination of this freedom. Where does this end up? I mean, what is this all about? How do you wrap it up and package it? Is there something we can say about that? Yes, Paul does. Gal 5:14: "For the whole law," now notice what he says here, "is fulfilled in" 75 rules that if you obey you pass the test? No. He says, "The whole law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement you shall love your neighbor as yourself." By saying "for the whole law," Paul is speaking of the moral law of God. He's not talking about the ceremonial religious laws, because they've add 613 of those. What he's talking about is the Ten Commandments. False teachers will never go this route because they know they can't

obey it. They cannot obey it. That's what condemns everybody. That's the standard that God requires out of every man. But, you see, he says that whole law, His standard of conduct, is going to be fulfilled in one word and that word is love. And that love is only produced by the Spirit of God in our life.

When we live under grace and the freedom to which we're called, motivated by His love, obligated to serve others, then we don't have to worry about the law. It's being fulfilled; by the way we treat each other it's being fulfilled. The love in us towards each other is what fulfills the very law that we've been concerned about. Well, "the whole law is fulfilled in one word in the statement you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Now Jesus did a very similar thing in Matthew 22:35 when He talked to a lawyer. And what He does is He takes the whole law and divides it into two segments, two commandments. He sums it all up. The first four in the first one, the last six commandments in the second one. It says in Matthew 22:35, "One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him. 'Teacher, which is the great commandment of the law?'" Now, which one is it You'd pick out? "And He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.'"

Let me ask you a question: did you try to do that last week and did you succeed? I don't think anybody wants to raise their hand. Why? Because He says, "If you love Me you'll obey Me." Did you disobey anything last week? If you did, you just missed out on the first one. Then the second one: He says "This is the great and foremost commandment," and that has to be taken place first. But secondly, "the second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself." Uh oh, uh oh. "On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets." If you're loving God, which means that we're obeying Him by faith, that's all it means, walking in the freedom He gives to us to be what He desires to be, then we are loving others; not in our feelings towards them, but in our actions towards them; then the whole law is being fulfilled. Isn't that incredible?

So the servanthood of the church is something that's got to be motivated by God. A preacher cannot make this happen. Oh, you can make it look that way on the surface, but only God can stir hearts, only God can make this happen. God demands our love, but He lives in us to free us from our own self-effort to produce it so that He may enable that which love requires, which is serving one another.

I want you to turn to John 21. I just had this on my heart. I've been studying this for a long time. I've studied John and gone through it many, many times, but there's a passage here that I think helps us understand this. Everybody that's always said, "Brother, I love God with all my heart, body, soul and strength," I've never seen it in their life. That's an arrogant statement. But how do you get to that point? Let me show you. John 21:15, this is of course Simon Peter, and I love Simon Peter. The only time he ever opened his mouth was to change feet and some of you relate, I know. We all, anybody that's outward and in that way you probably relate. Some of you quiet ones don't have a clue but I understand what he's doing. I relate to Jonah and Simon Peter. That's not a good résumé, by the way.

Jn 21:15, he told the Lord, he says, "Lord, I'll die for You. I'll die for You." Jesus said "Oh, shut up man, you're going to deny me three times before the cock crows." That's in Jn 13. Jn 18, what does he do? Exact, as a matter of fact, one of the other gospels says he cursed and said "I don't know this guy." Boy, he's scared to death, little coward. He's related to Gideon in the book of Judges.

And so Jesus comes to them, and I love this. He's always relentlessly pursuing us and He comes to them. They don't recognize Him, and He says, "Hey, guys, you caught any fish?" He gets right to the point. And they say no. And, by the way, that's the worst question you can ask somebody when they've been fishing and haven't caught anything. Don't ask them what they haven't caught. Don't tell them what they haven't caught. He said, "Throw the nets on the other side of the boat." Well, they did and somebody in the group said "Hey, that's Jesus," and Peter got so excited he jumped out of the boat. The rest of them came in in the boat. You know, he's the only one that would jump out because he couldn't wait to get to Jesus.

He's never repented of how three times he denied Jesus. But Jesus is going to teach him something right here. Jn 21:15: "So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?'" Some people say does that mean the fish or the disciples? And I'm thinking good grief, man there are some people, just go away. It doesn't matter what you put in there. "He said to Him, 'Yes Lord, You know that I love You.' He said to them, him, 'Tend My lambs.'" In other words, He showing him He's going to use him, but He asked him with *agape*. *Agape* is that love that says I am committed to you to do whatever it costs me, even if it's my life, if it's for your spiritual benefit I will do that. That's the kind of love God has for us, total commitment. He doesn't say, "Well do you like Me?" He said "do you love Me?" "And Peter answered Him back and said, 'Yes, Lord, You know that I love You.'" He changes the word. He changes the whole tone. He says, "I *phileo* you." Oh, You're my best friend. Man, I love being with You. There's nobody I'd rather be with than You, Lord. That's not what Jesus asked him.

Jn 21:16, "He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me?'" Do you love Me committed to Me that you would die for Me? "Yes Lord" he said to Him. 'You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Shepherd My sheep.'" Now, little does Peter know that His sheep is going to be Israel, which are a rebellious, stiff-necked, stubborn ones of the Old Testament. He's going to be

assigned to that. Paul was assigned to the Gentile world; he's assigned to the Jewish world. But it's interesting, same words, "You know I love you as a friend." He still hadn't caught it. If he has caught it he can't answer Him. He can't answer Him because he knows he doesn't. He doesn't love Him enough to die for Him. How do you know? He just denied Him three times, scared to death for his own life.

Then in Jn 21:17, "He said to him a third time, 'Simon, son of John,'" and this time Jesus changes His word and uses the word Peter's used. He says, "'Do you even love Me as a friend?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' and he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things.'" Why would he be grieved? He knows that Jesus already knows the answer. "He said, 'You know that I love You as a friend.'" I can't measure to that which You require. "Jesus said to him, 'Tend My sheep.'" Oh, it's so beautiful. I'm going to use you, Peter, but you haven't got a clue what's going to have to happen to you first. Fifty days later Pentecost came, and the Spirit of God came to live in man and He was going to come to produce what? Love. Even the love God requires of me, I can't produce, but God living in me can.

And then He says, "You're going to get to that place, Peter. Truly, truly I say to you, when you were younger you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished, but when you grow old you'll stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you and bring you where you do not wish to go." And what He's talking to him about here, He's telling him how he's going to die. Peter is going to learn to love Him. It's going to be a love growing within him to the point he'll die for the Lord Jesus Christ. He won't right now. It's not time yet. And then he says in Jn 21:19, "Now this He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this He said to him," now, Peter, go out and take a course on how to love Me. Is that what He said? Now Peter you go out and I've already convicted you, buddy, you better feel guilt, and if you don't love Me tomorrow like I told you to love Me tomorrow, then you're out of here. He didn't say that. He said one simple thing. What? "Follow Me, follow Me." Isn't it interesting?

When I learn to follow Him, which means I learn to yield to Him, letting Him in the yoke, letting Him be the main oxen that pulls me along, when I say yes to Him, surrender to Him, surrender to His word, He in me develops a love that I never knew could even be possible, and all of a sudden I begin to learn to love Him. And that love is really not even coming from me as much as it's coming from Him. And it's a divine relationship that's growing more and more and more and more intimate. And there'll come a day that I'll die for Him.

You see, the very thing God demands He lives in us to enable. What was the symptom of the Galatians that were not walking this way, not serving each other out of love, not interested more in what can I do for you, rather they were interested in what can you do for me? What was the symptom of these people? Galatians 5:15, "But if you bite and devour one another," now watch this now, "take care lest you be consumed by one another." The word "if" there is first class condition, which means "since you are." You're already doing it. See, what happens with error; it just splits the body of Christ. Everybody becomes opinionated overnight. Everybody says if you don't do this and this and this, then I'll do that.

You know, it's a mess. You know what I'm talking about. No doubt that this is going on at all. This is going on in Galatia. This is error, this is what flesh will do to a church. It'll destroy it. The words "bite and devour" are words that are used to describe how dogs and wild creatures treat each other. They had a humorous illustration back in their day of two snakes that got mad at each other and each one of them attacked the other by the tail. And somehow they ate each other and that was supposed to be funny in their day. I don't really catch it, but that's what they would use. And the idea is if you keep going after each other you're going to devour each other. You're going to destroy the very thing that you had.

And what, by the way, what organ in our body do we use to bite and devour? You know, if the devil has any place—and he can't get in a believer—but if he could, you know where he could hide? He'd put a saddle on the tongue right behind the teeth. That's how we bite and devour one another. That's what flesh does to you. That's what flesh always does to you. The callous things that we say when we're not walking in the freedom that God has given to us. I've done it, you've done it. We've all been there. The conviction should be to everybody in this room. When flesh is allowed to be our motivation we're not obligated to serve anybody, we're not motivated to love anybody. We want somebody to do something for us. And as a result of it, when they don't we're going to bite and we are going to devour, no matter how many religious things we're doing.

"Oh, I went on seven mission trips and I sing in the choir and I handed out the offering and you mean God doesn't count those?" Absolutely not, unless it came from a divine motivation to love and a divine obligation to serve. Now He counts that. You see, you may have two people serving side by side, one of them totally out of the flesh, one of them totally in the Spirit, one of them free, one of them a slave. And it's difficult many times to recognize which is which. But when we start looking at Scripture it's a mirror, remember. Man looks on the outside, but God looks where? See, you can fool me and I can fool you. We don't fool God. And division in the body of Christ, division in the family, if it's an individual family, I guarantee you there's flesh somewhere. God unites; flesh divides. The Galatians had been running well. Boy, they'd been living it right, doing it right. They'd been, but now they're biting and devouring one another.

The frustration of our freedom; try to add law to grace and see how frustrated you get. The expression of our freedom is in the love

that we have and the obligation to serve others. And the culmination of our freedom is as we're walking this way, the law is being fulfilled. You don't have to worry about all those rules. Yes, God's Word—don't hear me wrong here—there's responsibility, be doers of the Word. That's not what I'm saying. I'm saying the motivation of why we do what we do is never to measure up. Jesus measured up for us. We do what we do because we're already loved, not so that we can be. And so the beautiful picture of what the body of Christ can become, but what had happened to the Galatian people.

When God lives in us He motivates us and He obligates us and it is not about us. It is all about Him. My question: are you living in freedom this morning? Is it evidenced in what you say and how you treat others in the body of Christ?

Galatians 5:16 Be Led By the Spirit

What is the priority of our walk with Christ? He says in verse 16, "But I say, walk by the Spirit," notice the words, "and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." Walk by the Spirit. The way in which we experience the freedom that God has given to us in Christ and then it's going to be expressed in love relationships with one another, in servant love, is by walking by the Spirit.

Well, the last time we were together we talked about our freedom in Christ. In fact, this has been Paul's message. This has been his heart through the whole book of Galatians, but particularly in chapter 5. He started off chapter 5, verse 1, "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery." Now, I want to make sure we all understand. You say, Wayne, you sound like a broken record. I know, I know. I'm going to keep saying it till we get it. Freedom in Christ is only in Him. In other words, this freedom we're talking about is only in Christ. You have it no other way. If you do not know Christ today you are not a free person. You are a slave to your flesh and you have no way of getting out from under that. Only Jesus can set you free. That's our freedom in Jesus Christ. But once we are free in Him the only way we enjoy that freedom is by learning to surrender daily to Him and to His Word.

You see, we're only free when we're surrendered. We're only free when we're yielded. It almost sounds like an oxymoron, doesn't it? Only when I'm yielded to Him as a servant to Him in a love relationship can I enjoy the freedom that He has come to give me. You see, yes, we're free from the attitude of having to do more to be accepted. Yes, we're free from that because we're accepted in the Beloved, in Christ Jesus. We're free from having to measure up to a certain standard. Yes, we're free from that because He's already measured up for us. We're free from having to try to live like Jesus. You ever tried that? We're free from that because He wants to live His life in us. But what we're free to be now is what He's designed us to be. Everything He's demanded of our lives we are now free in Him to meet those demands in His power. He lives in us to live His life through us.

But we saw in Galatians the last time how to frustrate that freedom. I've frustrated it in my life. Have you frustrated it in your life? Isn't it amazing to have something and not live in it? And we saw how to do that. The way you frustrate it is try to add any kind of law to it, any kind of law. He says in Gal 5:11, "But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted?" He said, "Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished." What Paul is saying here is that there is no message of grace without the message of the cross. And there is no message when you add any law to that message. And circumcision was the law that the Galatians has bought into, which was initiation into the Mosaic system. And he said, listen, when you add any law to grace you have just erased it. It's not there anymore. They had accused him of preaching circumcision. Paul said, man, that's law. If I preached law, he said, first of all I wouldn't be persecuted because people love law. Times haven't changed have they? But he says since I preach grace I'm being persecuted. And he said, if I preached law I would have no message. The message would be abolished.

But we also saw something else the last time we were together, and that's how do we know somebody's walking in the freedom that God has given to them in Christ? How do we know we're enjoying that freedom? What is the expression of that freedom? And he's very clear. He says, "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh." Here comes the expression. "But through love serve one another." I don't know if you remember correctly or not or, or if you remember; back in Gal 5:6 Paul made a very clear statement. And he said circumcision or uncircumcision means nothing to God. What he's saying is you can do and do and do and do and do and do and do, and it means nothing for God. What God looks at is relationships, because only He can produce the love that causes relationships to be what they ought to be. And then he says it again here. He brings it up, "through love serve one another."

Has it ever dawned on you, as it is dawning on me, that relationships are more important than anything else to God? Now, I know, I feel the same way. If it wasn't for people I could live the Christian life. Have you ever felt that way? I mean, I don't know why it is God parachutes a brother in my life that drives me nuts. And God said that's the reason I put him in your life, because if you don't know how to relate to him you certainly will not know what it means to be free in Christ. And by the way, those relationships start at home; and if it doesn't work at home it doesn't work at church. If it doesn't work at church it doesn't work out in the world. God is more concerned with relationships than He is anything else we do for Him, because that is the signal that we're walking in the Spirit of God.

As a matter of fact, he goes on to say in Gal 5:14, that that love culminates in fulfilling the law. He says "the Law is fulfilled with one word." I have a buddy down in South Africa that's always on me about not preaching the Ten Commandments. I said, "Why do you want me to preach the Ten Commandments?" He says, "People need to understand it." I said, "Certainly they need to understand it. You ever tried to live it?" "Well, I try every day." I said, "You haven't made it yet, have you?" He's a preacher down there. And I said who was it that came and fulfilled those Ten Commandments? It was the Lord Jesus as the God-man. He fulfilled it. He gave the Law. He fulfilled the Law. Now He lives in us. And when we say yes to Him and He produces His love in us then those Ten Commandments are being fulfilled. That love fulfills those commandments. "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."

So God's divine motivation in a believer's life is to love others. But in that divine love comes a divine obligation. The word "serve" there is the word for slave. A slave serves because he has to and there's an obligation. But this is a divine thing. God's love within us obligates us and it's a beautiful thing to serve others around us.

And this is all abbreviated from what we looked at the last time. I understand that. But I want to make sure we got back into the flow. You say, Wayne, why do you do so much review? I'll tell you why. Because a lot of times people aren't here when we do the other messages. You're going to have to make sure you know where the current of the stream is carrying you before you just jump in. And now that's the flow that we've been in; love, through love serve one another. That love fulfills the law of Christ. But what we're going to see today, this to me is the most practical part of all of our study in the book Galatians. We're going to see how to appropriate, how to make it real in our lives, the freedom that we have in Christ Jesus. How do you do that, Wayne? How can I wake up every day and I can live in that freedom?

The thought hit me this morning that history is being made right now as I breathe and as I speak and as you breathe. You know why? Nobody's ever lived this day before, ever before. This is like a fresh sheet of paper. And God says, okay, let's see how you're going to live today. Let's just see what your relationships are going to be like today. Why don't you learn today to appropriate the freedom you have in Me?

Well there are three things in Gal 5:16-18 we're going to look at today. First of all is the priority of our walk with Christ. What is the priority of our walk with Christ? He says in Gal 5:16, "But I say, walk by the Spirit," notice the words, "and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." Walk by the Spirit. The way in which we experience the freedom that God has given to us in Christ and then it's going to be expressed in love relationships with one another, in servant love, is by walking by the Spirit. Now, I love this. The verb "walk" is a present imperative verb. What does that mean? Imperative means it's a command. In other words, he's not giving them a holy suggestion. This is a command from an apostle in God's Word. Walk by the Spirit. Present tense means you continue to walk. You don't just do it one day. You do it every day, every day, every moment, every hour, every hour, every second, every breathe, walk by the Spirit, walk by the Spirit.

The word "walk" is the word *peripateo*. It means to walk around circumspectly. In other words, in every single area of your life walk by the Spirit. Walk by the Spirit, every area, in the little things, in the big things. It doesn't matter; walk by the Spirit. Walk by the Spirit. Now, why would he tell us to walk by the Spirit? "What's the big deal, Wayne? All you ever talk about is surrendering to the Lordship of Christ. All you ever talk about is this kind of stuff. Why is it so important?" Listen, have we completely forgotten the context of Galatians? We can no more sanctify ourselves daily by our own efforts than we could save ourselves before we became a believer.

What is wrong with us when we think we're smart enough to sanctify our own lives? Don't we understand that the way we were saved is the way we live once we are saved? Galatians 3:1, "You foolish Galatians!" Remember? He says "Who has bewitched you before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publically portrayed as crucified?" You saw that He had to come and die on that cross. You understood that no religion could ever give to you what He bought for you on the cross. Then he says in Gal 3:2, "This is the only thing I want to find out from you." And he deals with their salvation first. "Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith?" In other words, was there any single act of obedience that you did other than bow before Christ and trust Him that somehow won for you your salvation? Obviously no. And then he says a second question, Gal 3:3, and he deals with their sanctification. "Are you so foolish, having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?"

You see, this is the trap we all fall into. We get saved, yes, Jesus, saving grace, but we forget the only way we're sanctified and made holy in the sense of our living it, daily living is by letting Jesus be Jesus in us. The same faith that it took to be saved is the same faith it takes day by day. Walk by the Spirit. Walk by the Spirit. I love the word "walk." It's a beautiful picture to me of taking one step at a time. Some of you have run up to me from time to time and said, "What are you going to do next? What are you going to do?" I don't know. Let me get this step down first. But, you see, everybody's got to have a plan because everybody has their own idea where it ought to be. No, no! Pick them up. Lord, You put it down. Lord, I'll pick it up. Lord, You put it down. Lord, I'll pick it up. Lord, You put it down. Where are we going? I don't know. Lord, I can't, You can. Lord, I can't, You can.

Walk, walk, walk by the Spirit. Walk, walk by the Spirit. Yes, it's called a race in other places, but this to me is the most beautiful picture is a walk. Walk by the Spirit. Let each step be totally influenced by the Word of God, by the will of God, by the Lord Himself

living in your life. Don't ever say anything that would offend a brother. Don't ever do anything that would intentionally harm a brother. Oh, no, no, no! You walk by the Spirit. Walk by the Spirit. Influenced by the Spirit, totally saturated by the Spirit, led by the Spirit. That's what he's talking about.

And that's a command. It's not an option. The Christian church in the 21st century has come so far from what it means to be a Christian we wouldn't recognize one if we saw one. What was it Watchman Nee says? We live such subnormal lives we see something that's normal we think it's abnormal. That's where we are. What does it mean to be a believer? It's every second. It's every breath. It's every choice. It's every word. It's every step. Walk by the Spirit. Walk by the Spirit.

Boy, the book of Joshua has the most beautiful picture of this. This is what God told Joshua. It's never been any different. Moses had died and that wasn't an exciting day in his life because God came to Joshua and said, "Joshua, I want you to take the people over into the Promised Land." And you know that Moses had already told him about the people. He said they're the most stiff-necked, rebellious stubborn people on the planet earth. I mean, that's what he told him. And He says, "Now, Joshua, God said it's your turn. You've been a yes man all of these years, now I'm going to put you behind the desk. You take them over. You take them over." And He told him how. In Joshua 1:3, "Every place on which the sole of your foot treads I have given it to you just as I spoke to Moses." Now what in the world is He talking about. Wayne, do you mean to tell me the sole of my foot? What's this got to do with anything in the Christian life? Oh, the word "sole" in the Hebrew means the bare part of the foot. Every place that your bare foot steps upon it's yours. You'll walk in the victory I told you was yours. But every place that the bare foot.

You say, "Wayne, you mean to take my shoes off I can be holy?" No, no, no. Maybe you've missed the point. Exodus 3:5, burning bush. Can you imagine being there at the burning bush? It's burning but it's not being consumed, and God speaks out of it and speaks to Moses. And He says in Exodus 3:5, "Then He said 'Do not come near here. Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is [what kind of ground?] holy ground.'" I love that chorus, "We're standing on holy ground."

That's what He's talking about. Joshua, every step that you take, you make certain that it's holy unto Me. You walk by the Spirit, Paul said. Joshua's being told the very same thing. Every step you take, let Me put it down. You take that step. You say yes to Me. You live influenced by the Spirit of God. And he had that experience, didn't he. Joshua 5:15, "And the captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua [they've gotten to Jericho], 'Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.' And Joshua did so." And it's a good thing he did, because what God was about to do his human brain could not receive until he considered it to [[be holy]] unto the Lord. God was going to tell him to walk around the city being silent for one time every day for six days. And then on the seventh day walk around seven times. When they blew the trumpets the walls came falling down and everybody said what an awesome God we have. What an awesome God we have! How did they walk in the victory? They had to learn to walk holy before God.

And, folks, we have got to get this in our head. We walk daily, daily, daily we walk by the Spirit. That's what Paul is saying. That's what he means by walk by faith. There is no other definition. He's just explaining what he's already said; in 2:20, "I've been crucified with Christ and it's no longer I who lives, but Christ lives in me." Now, how do I live this life? He says, "And the life which I now live in the flesh," in this body, the same body I had before I got saved, "I live by faith in the Son of God." I walk by the Spirit. I take every step to be holy as unto the Lord because I want to walk in the victory and the power and the presence that God says is mine and rightfully so in Him. Walk by the Spirit.

Paul says it a little different in Ephesians 5:18. Instead of saying "Walk by the Spirit" he says "be filled with the Spirit." It says, "And do not get drunk with wine for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit." When I was growing up people taught me that that's like an empty glass of water and you fill it up and you drink it down and you run to church and get it filled up again. Some people think that's what church is every week. Oh no, no, no. First of all, it's "be being filled." It's a present tense. How can a glass be continually filled? There's only one way. Knock the bottom out of it and put it in the river and let it continually be filled with the river that's flowing through the glass. Walk by the Spirit. Walk by the Spirit. Be influenced by the Spirit. Make sure your life is surrendered to God and let the river of God, the river is here, the river's in us, and He says let it loose. Let it loose, release it. Walk by the Spirit.

Jesus didn't say that. Jesus said "Abide in the vine." He said, "I'm the vine, you're the branches," and He said "if a branch abide in Me and My words abide in you, you'll not produce any fruit, but if you do you'll produce much fruit." Peter didn't say it that way. Peter said, "Be supplied out of the faith you already have. Work out of that which you already have, the divine reservoir of what you already have." John didn't say that. John says, "Walk in the light as He's in the light and you'll not have to reap the consequences of the darkness." It's the same thing. The Bible doesn't say seven different things, the Bible says the same thing seven different ways. Walk by the Spirit. Walk by the Spirit.

The word "Spirit" is in the dative sense, it's a noun. It's in a dative case, which means that's the means. It means that's why they translated it "by the Spirit." There's no "by" in the original text, but because it's in the dative, "Walk by the means of the Spirit," depending on the Spirit of God, yielded to the Word of God. This is Christianity. This is the way we participate in the freedom we talk about, but so often do not enjoy. And Paul says "if you do this you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." And he begins to open

up the fact that we've got a huge problem we're dealing with. You say, "Well, I don't, because I've been a Christian for 40 years." I hate to tell you, you've got it just like I've got it. But the priority has got to be in the midst of the problem we're about to see unveil in Gal 5:17, and the last part of Gal 5:16, walk by the Spirit.

A man came by my office several months ago. I do not know him that well. He's a wonderful gentleman, loves the Lord. He gave me a horror story about what happened to his life years ago when he took the Bible and set it up on a shelf, went to church, taught Sunday School, but never let the Word of God permeate his mind and his life during the week, and how that all kinds of things happened. He almost lost his family. And he said finally one day God broke him and somebody told him if you're going to walk in the Spirit you better get in the Word of God, and he got in the Word of God every single day. He said, "I didn't know what I was doing. I just started reading in Genesis and I'd read every single day." And on the 50th day for whatever reason that number is significant, he said on that day something happened to him. He said he was so overwhelmed with the presence of God and he said the Word, it so saturated his mind. For 50-some days he'd been in the Word, he'd been in the Word. He noticed how it changed the way he talked to his wife. He changed the way he talked to his children. It changed the way he looked at other people. It changed everything about him and he said that was 680-some days ago. And he said, with tears streaming down his face sitting up there in my office, he said, "Man, I don't know what happened to me, but I'll tell you one thing, the Word of God got so much inside of me." He said, "It's just like daily I walk moment by moment practicing the presence of Christ."

That's Christianity, folks. "Oh brother Wayne, that's a little extreme, don't you think?" Folks, if we understood how extreme Christianity was then half of the people in churches in America would have gone home already. This is Christianity. Walk by the Spirit. Walk by the Spirit.

The second thing he brings up, and to tell you what we're going to face, is the problem we're going to have in our walk. Actually he starts it in Gal 5:16. And I want to tell you right now that when you get up in the morning and you look in the mirror, you're looking at the biggest problem you're going to have all day long. And I hate to tell you, but I'm saying that about me too. You're not my problem. Although from time to time I've considered it. Hey, on the same token, I'm not your problem. You say, well, I'm not my problem. The devil's my problem. Oh, get off of that and study your Scriptures. What's he going to do to you if he catches you? Gum you to death? Jesus ripped his teeth out at the cross. That's not the problem of the Christian church today. The problem of the Christian church today is the flesh that we have to deal with every day of our life, and we need to understand that anything it produces is called sin before God, no matter whether it's in a religious context or whether it's in a rebellious context. It is sin, sin, when the flesh manifests itself and that's the problem we deal with.

Gal 5:16 says "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and" if you'll do this, walk influenced by the Spirit, moment by moment, breath by breath, "you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." Now, there you go right there. The word "carry out" is the word, one word in the Greek, *teleo*. *Teleo* means to accomplish something. If I choose to walk by the Spirit—Lord, I'll pick it up. You put it down. Lord, I can't. You can—then the flesh desire is not going to be accomplished. It will not fulfill its goal, which is to ruin relationships, which is to damage everything that's around us.

The flesh has no good goal to it even though we think it does. You see, he says "if you'll walk by the Spirit you'll not carry out the desires of the flesh." The flesh always has an agenda. The flesh, now listen to me, always has an agenda. It's always seeking to accomplish something. But so is the Holy Spirit exactly that way. The Holy Spirit's seeking to accomplish something in our life, and the problem is the two agendas are not ever the same. They'll differ somewhere in the process. So if we're walking by the Spirit then the flesh cannot accomplish what it desires. Sin will not be accomplished. Instead of calling it flesh, let's call it what it is, sin. Or there's another word you can call it, self. So Paul is showing us that there's an evident conflict between the Spirit of God living in us and our own fleshly desires.

Let me ask you a question just to make sure we're all on the same base today. How many of you dealt with this conflict in your life this past week at least once? Anybody that says he hasn't dealt with his flesh, he's either lying or he's dead, one or the other. Yes, you've dealt with your flesh. "Well, brother Wayne, I've been a believer for 30 years." Big deal! God's not impressed. Nobody is, neither is anybody else. The key is how do we live today? How did we live yesterday? Did we obey the Spirit? Did we walk by the Spirit? If we did then don't worry about sin because when you walk by the Spirit righteousness is accomplished and not sin.

He proceeds to explain the conflict in Gal 5:17, "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit." That term "sets its desire" is interesting. The word "desire" is *epithumeo*. *Epithumeo* means an intense passionate desire. *Epi* is an intensifier, pushes it, pushes it. But *thumos* is a passionate desire. It's intense in its own right. So this is a huge word here. There is a strong intense passionate desire for the flesh to accomplish its purpose. "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit." The word for against is *kata*. It means that which is in opposition to something in this context. Here's on one side; this is head to head conflict folks, head to head conflict.

I came in yesterday, after preaching all last week. I came in just in time to see the second half of the Tennessee/Florida game. All of you Florida folks, oh, bless your sweet heart, you're in moaning and mourning today. But I want to tell you one thing, there was no

love lost between those two teams. I'll promise you anybody in Tennessee loves to hate Florida and they were just head on, head on, head on. Two teams in opposition to each other, that's exactly the picture here. The flesh lined up on one side, the Spirit lined up on the other and there's a competition that's going on.

He goes on in Gal 5:17 and says, "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." It has its agenda and it seeks to overcome. And "these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please." The Holy Spirit has the agenda of God that is to be accomplished. But now here's something that you might not understand. Not only does He have the agenda of God, and many of us have gotten in on that agenda because we know the Word of God, etc. However, now listen to me carefully, listen carefully, we need this word. The Holy Spirit also has the way it's to be accomplished. Now understand what I'm saying. You can know what's right and you can know what God wants, but if you don't know the methodology of the Spirit, which is by faith, by faith, by faith, then you're going to push and shove and bend and twist and manipulate to get what you, you believe God has said is right, but we're going to get it our own way.

That's the Jacob syndrome. Jacob did the same thing. Matter of fact, we saw in Galatians so did Abraham, so did Abraham. God had told him what He was going to do, but they had to get involved and do it their own way. Folks, there's only one way God's agenda is ever accomplished and that's by faith, by faith, by faith. Anything else—now listen to me carefully—is sin. Understand what I just said. Anything else is sin. "Oh, but brother Wayne, I don't do the big bad five." I'm not talking about the big bad five. I'm talking about religious sin. And I'll tell you what happens. Every time relationships are ruined when people know what they believe is right, but they go about it their own way to get it.

The agenda of the Spirit that is in opposition to the agenda of the flesh also has a methodology to it. Walk by the Spirit. Walk by faith. There is no other way to see God's will accomplished. "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." This struggle every believer has. Every believer has it. I don't know if whether you're even aware of it or not. I'm just wondering how many people really understand what sin is and how many people understand the wickedness and the sickness of the flesh? But all of us have this battle in our life. We either have a choice of doing things God's way or doing things our way. Again, we might have the right agenda, but have the wrong methodology.

Religious flesh is what Paul fought against in Romans 7. This is what the Galatians bought into. They knew what was right, but they went about it their own way. Paul had the same problem: his religious flesh, not his rebellious flesh, but his religious flesh. In Romans 7:18, and I love this, because it comforts me. It should comfort you: "For I know that nothing good dwells in me." I mean, that's a pretty good ending. Let's just sing a song and go home. I wonder if anybody in here caught it. Did you catch it? "Oh, you come to my business and I'll show you what's good in me, buddy. I've built it from the bottom up and I've got money in the bank and I've got a retirement plan and I've got a motor home and I'm going to see America. I've done things right. There's some good in me." And God says, no there isn't. I've never seen yet a hearse pulling a U-haul. Have you? Nothing good down here that we're going to take with us other than that which Christ did through us.

He says, "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is in my flesh." Now he clarifies it, "in my flesh. For the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not, for the good that I wish I do not do, and I practice the very evil that I do not wish." Here's a man that's trying to conquer his flesh and he can't do it. I just want to make sure you're with me. Has anybody struggle with this this past week? "Yeah! I really wished I'd said this to that person, but oh me, what came out of my mouth!" "For the good that I wish I do not do, but I practice every evil that I do not." Oh, when the great apostle Paul can admit this, that makes it a little bit easier for me to live the Christian life and oh, I'm in some pretty good company here. I've got the same battle he had.

But not only did he say that, he said in Ro 7:21, "I find in the principle that evil is present in me." Oh! "The one who wishes to do good, for I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man." Now, what lost person—some people say he's lost here. Ridiculous!—what lost person concurs with the Law of God in the inner man? "But, you see, I see a different law." Look where it is. Look what it's attached to. "In the members of my body." You wonder why your body's dying. You wonder where all these sinful desires come from? "Waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members" and he goes on down and he says, "O wretched man that I am!"

I think I say that almost every day of my Christian walk. O wretched man that I am. You know what that means in Greek? If you know the song, "Nobody knows the troubles I know," as far as I see, "nobody knows but Jesus." You go home that way at night sometime? Things you wanted to do you didn't do, the things you wanted to say you didn't say. Why? Because your flesh has an agenda and you bow to it. And as a result you have ruined relationships. You have crippled other people in your path and here you are at night and you think, "Good grief, Lord, why do You even fool with me?" And thank God He does. Thank God His grace is fresh. Thank God His mercy is fresh every day.

But, you see, if we're not going to start dealing with our flesh then what are we doing? The fleshly desires resonate in the members of our body. Gal 5:17, "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another," and watch, "so that you may not do the things that you please." The verb "may not do" is present active, that you may

not continue to do the things that you please. Now what happened to the Galatians? They were running well. Did they continue? No. Why? Because their flesh bought into a message they thought was better than the message of surrendering, being in God's word. They could play church rather than be walking with Him intimately, daily. And as a result they could not continue to do as they pleased. The word for "please" is *thelo*. It means the will, or the intention, the things that you will to do, the intention of your life. And they were running well. They were doing it well. But when we obey the flesh, immediately that is stopped and it cannot continue to walk by faith, which means you cannot continue to have relationships that are divine. You cannot continue to enjoy the freedom that God says is yours.

So put this with the context then in walking by faith and what is Paul telling the Galatians? What is he telling us? Do you want to walk by faith? I believe you do. I don't believe there's a Christian anywhere that doesn't want to walk by faith. What is it that hinders us in our walk? Our flesh. When we choose for a second to bow to it, at that moment we're shut down and that's what happened to the Galatian people.

Paul draws a picture of what our walk of faith is all about in Gal 5:18. And it to me it just, it's the clearest picture if anybody's struggling with Galatians, I mean, it could not get any clearer than this verse. He says, "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law." Now, there it is. So many people get struck, struggling with "what is the Law" and "I don't understand what you're saying." Well, here, just forget all that. Here it is right here. "If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law." First of all, this is the clearest statement of what it means to walk by faith, walk by the Spirit, walk filled with the Spirit that I've seen anywhere. As we saw in Gal 5:16, when we're yielded to God's Word we're being led by the Spirit then there's no way that the Law can be fulfilled.

Walking after the flesh, which is what we've been dealing with in Gal 5:17, is simply when our flesh dominates us. And I understand; I've been dominated by it before too. I'm not throwing a rock at anybody. All of us have been in this boat. But when it's done, then what happens is the joy, the wonderful freedom that God gives us just gets shut down. And that lifestyle is futile. I'm going to tell you why. The flesh is powerless to fulfill the Law and the Law is powerless to conquer the flesh. You don't want to go that way. Being under Law is simply the opposite of walking by faith. So the next time you hear the statement "Are you under Law or are you under grace," it's just simply which one's dominating your life. Is the Spirit dominating you or is your flesh dominating? That's all it is. It's a very simple statement. "But if you're led by the Spirit you are not under the Law."

Maturity in the Christian life is walking by the Spirit. I'll say that again. Maturity, and that's not age by the way, folks, maturity in the Christian life is when we walk by faith. You say, prove that to me in Scripture. Thank you. Romans 8:14, "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God these are sons of God." And he takes that word for "son" which means mature sons, *huios*, and he says, "If you're being led by the Spirit of God then you are sons of God." So maturity is when a person chooses to say yes, and walk by the Spirit, walk by the Spirit, walk by the Spirit, be influenced by the Spirit, be influenced by the Word, let your word be seasoned by the Spirit of God so that you say things that build up and not tear down, etc. And when you do that, you've walked in maturity. We've already looked in the context of Galatians how they'd gone back to the nursery. They had chosen rather to go back to the flesh. And this is what happened to the church of Corinth. It's not as if this is something new. This is what happened in the church of Corinth. "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law."

But here comes the best part of the whole message in the first part of the verse: "If you're led by the Spirit." Now, I just want you to think about that for a second. "If you're led by the Spirit." That word "led" means if you're willingly led. Have you ever noticed some people, you'd have to get them down on the floor and beat it into their heads. Now, people come in for counseling. That's why I don't counsel very much. I think a counseling session ought to be about five minutes: two and a half minutes for you to tell me your problem, two minutes for me to give you the scriptural understanding of bowing before Christ, and 30 seconds for you to decide whether you're going to do it or not. That's why I'm not gifted that way. If you're going to do it, good, go do it; I'm going fishing. That's just the way I look at it.

You've got to be willingly led. Do you understand the difference, what I'm saying here? Not just led, I've been led before, dragged. No, willingly led; if you're willingly led by the Spirit then the Law is absolutely no problem to you at all, and you've just stepped into the victory that God wants you to have. That's the secret. Victory is not you and me overcoming sin; victory is Jesus overcoming us. When we think of this as something, "Oh, do I have to do that?" "Oh, you're kidding; you get to do this." You get to find out what joy really is like. You get to redirect your whole efforts in life to get into the Word of God and let the Word of God get inside of you. And as you say yes to Him, you begin to experience the journey of Christ being who He is in your life. It is just so simple.

It's interesting that you've got to put together the Word and the Spirit. Now, I keep saying that, but I want to show you why I say that. Paul wrote Ephesians, and Paul wrote Colossians, and they're commentaries on each other, just like Romans and Galatians are commentaries on each other. I want you to notice something. In Ephesians 5:18 he says, "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit." We read that, then Gal 5:19, "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord." Now, it goes on to talk about your family structure. That's Ephesians. Now watch what he says in Colossians. It doesn't say it the same way. In Colossians 3:16 he says, "Let the word of Christ richly

dwelt within you.” What? He said “Be filled with the Spirit over here.” That’s right. Watch, “with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with,” look at this, “with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” And then he goes right into the family. It’s exactly the same. But on one side, be filled with the Spirit; on the other side, let the word of God dwell richly in your life. You can’t have it one or the other.

You’re going to have to marry the two together. Being filled with the Spirit is the word of God richly dwelling in my life. That’s why I love this Book. That’s why I want you to love it, because it’ll change your mind the Spirit will transform your life. So being filled with the Spirit, walking by faith, fulfilling the desires of the Spirit is connected to being surrendered to the Word of God.

Well, I’ve got to close. What’s our priority? You say, “I want to walk in the Spirit.” So do I. Then walk by the Spirit. What does that mean? Moment by moment, breath by breath, before you ever say another word, say, “Lord, is this what You want me to say? Is it seasoned with Your grace? Is this a wholesome word that’ll come from my mouth? Is this a wholesome deed that I’m about to do? Is this You or is this me?” And you walk by the Spirit.

The problem with this will obviously be your flesh, all of our flesh. But don’t believe the lie that the flesh is stronger than the Spirit. No, sir, the flesh has been conquered. It’s been reckoned dead in Romans 6:6. But the way you keep it in that position is by continuing to say yes to Christ. The problem of this walk is our flesh. But then the picture is clear. To be willing to be led by God’s Spirit, and when you do that, that’s all He’s asking, that’s all He’s asking, just “Wayne, say yes. Wayne, please, just say yes to Me. Just be led by My Spirit.”

You know what I want for you? I want you to wake up every day so overwhelmed with who God is that you walk in the freedom He’s given to you and I want someday our church to be such a place that the atmosphere of the Spirit of God is so strong in here people can walk on this property and get down on their knees and ask Jesus to come in their life. That’s my prayer.

Galatians 5:19 The Sexual Deception of the Flesh

Well, in our text today we’re going to start seeing the baggage that goes with religious flesh. When you choose to do things your way, when I choose to do things my way; this is for all of us. The rest of this stuff somehow is going to start surfacing into our life. It lurks in the shadows of religious flesh. It’s always there. No matter what name you put to the flesh, it’s still flesh. And what we need to realize as we get into this list is a very important thing. If you find somebody whose lifestyle is characterized by what we’re going to look at in Gal 5:19-21 then you have to understand that person does not know Christ, and Paul says that.

Galatians 5, and we’re going to be focusing in on Gal 5:19, but just sort of hold your place there. It’s so good as believers to understand the struggle that all of us have in our Christian life. Nobody’s exempt. Nobody’s too young. Nobody’s too old. Every believer has this exact same struggle. And Galatians 5:17 tells us what it is. It says, “For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another so that you may not do the things that you please.”

Now, I want to make certain that all of us together understand the term “flesh.” We need to understand that. What does that mean? The term “flesh” in the Greek is the word *sarx*, and it refers to the human body. That’s the first definition, but there’s another definition we’re going to look at. There’s two things it can mean. Like I said, first of all the human body, simply flesh and blood. Galatians 2:20 is our key verse for the whole study of the book of Galatians. “I have been crucified with Christ,” Paul says, “and it’s no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” Isn’t that awesome? The divine exchange: it’s not me, but it’s Christ living in me. “And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God.”

Now he says “the life I now live in the flesh.” That term “flesh” there means the fleshly body, the human body, flesh and blood. And it’s sort of bummer, isn’t it. When you get saved you have the same body you had before you got saved. One day we’ll be glorified and have a brand new resurrected body. But when we get saved nothing changes on the outside. If you’re ugly before you got saved, you’re going to be ugly after you get saved. There’s nothing you can do. If you’re short you’re going to be short. If you’re tall you’re going to be tall. If you’re fat you might can work on that, but anyway you have the same body. Flesh and blood, that’s the body he’s talking about. So it can refer to the human body. Many other passages I could take you to, but that’s one of the meanings of the word *sarx*. There is another word for that word “body” but that’s the word we’re using here is *sarx*.

Secondly, it refers to—and this is the contextual meaning we’ll be looking at—the sinful mindset that we have apart from Christ and His influence in our life. Let me say it another way. It’s the way we think and consequently the way we do what we do without the input of God’s Word and without the energizing of His Spirit. I’ll make sure I say that again, because this really is our context. This has to be understood: it’s the way we think and consequently the way we do what we do without the input of God’s Word and without the energizing of God’s Spirit in our life. There are many people that are believers who haven’t figured this out yet. They haven’t seen their need to be in this Book to have their minds renewed and their lives transformed. So when the flesh enters in it can be in a

religious context. It can be within a church group of people, not being influenced by the Word and not being energized by the Spirit of God. Now, just like I said, this latter meaning is what we're dealing with.

In Galatians 3:3 Paul said, and so clearly he says, "Are you so foolish," he says, "having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected in the flesh?" Do you think for some reason you can accomplish in your life what God is seeking to do? You know, to put this in a vernacular that we can understand, do you really think you can grow a church, Wayne? Do you really think you can do that? Do you really think you can build anything, Wayne? Do you think this? You see, this is what the flesh does to us. This is what Paul is saying to the Galatians. They fell into that trap thinking that God was excited to have them on their side they began to go back to doing things their way. Now they were not bad things, but they were doing it without the input of God's Word, without the energizing of His Spirit.

And there's no coincidence that the terms are there that it can mean the human body and it could also mean the mindset of flesh. There's no coincidence there. In fact, Paul says in Romans 6:6 that we have a body of sin. Now when you wake up in the morning look in the mirror and say "Good morning, body of sin," and you'll understand completely what you're dealing with all day long. That's what you're dealing with. We have a wicked sinful body of flesh indwelt by the perfect Holy Spirit of God. And He didn't come to make our flesh any better; He came to replace it. So therefore our minds have to be renewed so our lives can be transformed.

Now Paul says and very clearly how the mindset of sin dwells within the human fleshly body. Look in Romans 7:18. It says, "For I know that nothing good dwells in me"—now this is the apostle Paul speaking; we mentioned this last week—"that is, in my flesh." He qualifies it. "For the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not." How many of you determined last week you were going to do something and you ended up doing something exactly the opposite and you're ashamed for it? Anybody besides me? Yeah, I just want to make sure you're on the same page.

Paul says, referring to this mindset again of the flesh, that it dwells within our flesh. He says in Romans 7:23, "But I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in," and look at those last three words, "in my members," so it's associated with the fleshly human body. One day we'll have a glorified body. Right now we've been delivered from the penalty of sin; daily we're being delivered as we say yes to Him, from the power of sin. But thank God one day we'll be delivered from the presence of sin when we get a glorified body. We won't have to deal with sin anymore. But down here we're going to have to deal with it.

So far in our study we've discovered some things about this thing called the flesh. We've discovered some very important things and truths about it. First of all, number one is that we know the flesh can in no way sanctify us. To say that in a little different terms, to make sure everybody understands, the flesh cannot act in any way that measures to God's standard. Now, I know some people don't agree with that and you think you can. Well, help yourself. You just try to live like God tomorrow. That's the standard He requires, is the standard He lives and who He is. And no man can attain to that standard.

Again in 3:3, "Are you so foolish, having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected?" And that word "perfected" means are you accomplishing your purpose? "Are you now being perfected by the flesh?" There's nothing the flesh can do that God's impressed with at all. So number one, it can't sanctify itself. So you don't want to go that route. But number two, we learned that flesh can only produce that which is illegitimate in God's sight, unacceptable to God. In an analogy Paul makes with Hagar and Sarah in chapter 4, he talks about the children that were born to them. Now, each of these children, Abraham's the father of both these two children that he's talking about. In 4:23, "But the son by the bondwoman [and that's Hagar] was born according to the flesh and the son by the free woman [Sarah] through the promise."

Now, both of these women bore these children by Abraham, and it represents the two choices everybody has to do things our way or to do things God's way. The child produced by Hagar and Abraham was a child that Scripture says according to the mindset of the flesh, according to man trying to help God out. It was not a bad thing they were seeking to do. They went about it the wrong way, and it was unacceptable to God. But the child produced by Sarah and Abraham was by faith; therefore it was acceptable to God. An interesting thing is, Hebrews 11 says that God had to do a miracle in Sarah's life to give her the ability to bear a child. Abraham was 100 and she 90, and there was no question that God did this one. And so you see that's the two choices. It was an analogy. Paul was trying to show us that anything the flesh produces is illegitimate and unacceptable in God's sight.

The third thing we realized about the flesh, and we've studied so far in Galatians, we've learned that those who choose the flesh to rule their lives, and this is within the church; now, folks listen to me, if you ever want to understand division and conflict in the church you got two groups of people. You've got one group that's walking by faith and you've got one group that will not walk by faith. They're going to do it their way, and as a result there's going to be conflict. It says that very clearly in 4:29. And Paul, again using an analogy to bring about his point, he says, "But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit," and then he brings it up today. He says, "So it is now also."

I had a pastor call me. And he said, "Wayne, I need your help." And I said "What's going on?" He said, "Man, I've begun to teach the

Word.” He said, “I’ve gotten excited about it. I’ve learned how to study it and I’ve been teaching people the fullness in Christ that they have. I’ve been teaching the exchanged life. I’ve been teaching the fact that it’s not us, but it’s Christ living through us.” And I said, “What’s your problem? That’s awesome!” He said, “The reaction I’m getting from my church is about to kill me.” And I said, “What do you mean?” He said, “They have risen up against me. They cannot stand it when they’re not doing something for God rather than letting God do something through them and the conflict was immediate.”

That’s exactly what Paul’s talking about. You see, these two mindsets that are in the church—and Paul’s addressing the churches of southern Galatia—they conflict with one another. You’ve got one group that’ll walk by the Spirit, trusts God, and for the right, they not only know the agenda of God, they know the methodology of God. They say yes to Him. They yield to Him. They say, “Jesus, be Jesus in me, no longer me, but Thee, resurrection power fill me this hour. Jesus, be Jesus in me.” And then you’ve got the other group that says, “I’m not about to get into the Word of God. We’ve been doing things our way for so long, we’re going to continue to do it that way.” And boom, there’s your conflict within the church of Jesus Christ. That’s the same thing in a family. It’s the same thing with friends and relationships. It’s the same way wherever you go. So that’s the third thing we learned about the flesh. It will conflict with those who seek to walk after the Spirit.

And then fourthly, we’ve also learned from our last study that the flesh has an intense agenda, but one who obeys the Spirit of God will not see that agenda accomplished. And that’s the beautiful balancing truth. Yes, the flesh wars against the Spirit, and it has its own agenda. But all we have to do is learn to say yes to Christ and victory is not me overcoming my flesh. Victory is Jesus overcoming me. He says in 5:16, that we looked at last time, “But I say walk by the Spirit.” I love this verse. “And you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.” Walk by the Spirit. I just love the message of last week. I wish I could preach it every single week from now on, because it’s so practical to where we are, and God made it so simple. He said “Walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.”

And Gal 5:18 tells you how to walk. He says “Those who are led by the Spirit,” not dragged. How many times in my life has God had to grab me by the nape of the neck and drag me? “Wayne, will you do My will?” “Well, I guess so, but, but, but,” and He has to drag me. That’s not the key. That’s not it, no sir. Willingly led. The word “led” means to be willingly, willfully led, yielded. You know sometimes it takes a little bit of living to get to that point. And all of us should be at that point. We know what failure is now. We know the sickness of our flesh. It’s a beautiful time in our life to say, “Lord, I’m not going to fight You anymore. It takes two to fight and I’m not going to fight. I’m just going to say yes to You. Lead me willingly, lead me.”

I’ll tell you what, the battle is lost with the flesh the moment we choose not to be willingly led by Jesus and His Word. That’s when it’s lost, right. There’s no gray area. There’s no gray area at all. You either are or you aren’t, and that’s what he’s telling the Galatian believers they need to get this down. Don’t call it anything other than what it is. Flesh is sin and sin has to be dealt with. And when a person is not willingly led by the Spirit of God he’s walking after his flesh. And since our flesh is the problem and we have identified it already in Galatians, we don’t even have to come to this passage, but we are, then we need to know more about it. We need to know more about the damage and the deception it can bring to our walk with Christ.

The false teachers of Galatia had taught a message that really sounded good. And you know what? They had to be good teachers, because the very people that Paul himself disciplined bought it that fast. It was evidently polished and smooth. It was packaged and they looked at that and they said “Whoa! This is better than the Holy Spirit of God living in our life. This is better than us seeking the Lord and trusting Him and waiting upon Him. This is much better.” And they bought it. But what they bought, listen to me, what they bought they didn’t realize the baggage that went with it. And this is what Galatians 5:19-21 is trying to say. You see, you can buy into religious flesh. And I’m not talking about adultery and things like that. That’s the big bad five. You can buy into religious thinking. You can get into knowing God’s agenda, but doing it your way. Or you can get into not caring either way, whatever. But you don’t realize what’s on the other side, on the flip side. On the flip side is all the garbage that the flesh attaches. You can’t have one without the other. It comes together.

By choosing not to be willingly led by the Spirit the Galatians had bought into the deceptive package of the flesh. And they soon discovered something, and every one of us have discovered it, that flesh is rotten, it is wicked and you can’t buy part of it without getting all of it to some degree. I’m so concerned with people all over our country, churches particularly that are going to formulas. Everybody needs a new book to read so they can have a better Christian life. Everybody needs another formula. And the question that comes to my mind is, what’s going to be next year? It’s like, “Wayne, give me anything, but the completeness I have in Christ and the power of His Word in my life. Give me anything but that.” And that’s the day we’re living in.

I had a good friend call me from yesterday and we talked for an hour. He said, “Wayne, I’ve been traveling to churches. I’ve put 143,000 miles on my van as I travel from church to church.” And he said, “Do you realize the people who preach the Word of God like you’re doing and other people are doing, do you realize they’re one out of every 5 or 10?” He said, “You can count them on one hand. People all over this country, people have bought the lie that people need to have their felt needs met rather than bringing them to Jesus and bringing them to the power of His Word.”

This is the day we live in. The Galatians lived in a day very similar. They didn't want the Word of God. They didn't want to walk with God. It's too much fun to have this program that we can do or this formula that we can follow. Walk by the Spirit, be willingly led by the Spirit and this is the way you'll find the spiritual satisfaction that you're looking for. You don't need a program unless that program somehow drives you to your dependency upon Christ and your dependency upon His Word.

Well, in our text today we're going to start seeing the baggage that goes with religious flesh. When you choose to do things your way, when I choose to do things my way; this is for all of us. The rest of this stuff somehow is going to start surfacing into our life. It lurks in the shadows of religious flesh. It's always there. No matter what name you put to the flesh, it's still flesh. And what we need to realize as we get into this list is a very important thing. If you find somebody whose lifestyle is characterized by what we're going to look at in Gal 5:19-21 then you have to understand that person does not know Christ, and Paul says that. The last part of Gal 5:21 he says, "Of which I forewarned you," all of these things we'll mention, "just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Now that's pretty clear words.

The word for "practice" is the word *prasso*. *Prasso* means habitual practice and it's a different Greek word, so don't get hung up in your theology. When you see a person habitually living this way, you've got a person that doesn't know Christ. The word *poieo* is another word which means, yes, from time to time you're tempted. You see, before you become a believer you chase after sin; after you become a believer sin chases after you. And from time to time you'll fall into its trap. And any of these things can appear in your life for a period of time, but a believer will break and repent of that. A person who's not a believer will live in it as a lifestyle. There are a lot of people who attend churches, folks, that have never met Jesus Christ. They've joined the church, but they've missed Him. Just look at their lifestyles and that tells you everything about who lives within them or who doesn't live within them.

Well, Galatians 5:19, here we are, only one verse today: "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident." Now, that's present tense, which means they're always evident. The apostle Paul is saying to them, "I'm not telling you something you don't already know." They were already there, and that's why he doesn't even finish his list. He just starts off to show them some of the evidences of flesh. "The deeds of the flesh are," everybody knows they're there. Paul's just trying to get us to admit it. The word "evident" is the word *phaneros*, which means clearly, clearly evident to all. Everybody knows them. That's why Paul, as I said, doesn't complete the list because we can add a lot of things to these. As a matter of fact, there are other lists in Scripture that add things to the Word. The list in Galatians 5:1-21, there's another thing, can never be attributed to God. So don't ever blame God for any of these things. The only person you can blame is yourself when you choose to walk after the flesh and these things surface in your life.

Well, let's wade in and let's just see what Paul has for us to see, okay. Let's just wade in. If any of these sins are in your life then they must be dealt with under the blood of Christ. Please understand that; don't sweep them under the rug, put them under the blood. We have to learn to deal with sin as God exposes it into our life. There's only one we're going to look at today, and it's the toughest one, now I understand that. Stay with me. We'll move on next week. It'll be better.

First of all, the sexual deception of the flesh; that's the first thing that Paul wants them to see, and evidently they're experiencing this because of their unwillingness to bow to Christ. Paul mentions three words in the New American Standard translation and four words in [[the King James Version]] that all have to do with elicit sexual behavior. He mentions immorality, impurity and sensuality. This is what the flesh produces and causes one to seek after when he's not walking by the Spirit. Remember, walk by the Spirit. How do I do that, Wayne? Be willingly led by the Christ and His Word. If I'll just do that I don't have to worry about this. But if I'm not doing that, I'd better be concerned about it.

Isn't it amazing how the flesh makes us think that lust and love are the same thing? Now, you just see some of these young fellows, folks, and hormones are moving rapidly and they're standing there, the moon's out and the stars in his eyes, the stars in her eyes and he looks at her and says, "Honey, I love you." I sure hope if you're that young lady you'll step back about 30 feet and make him explain what he means by loving you. You'd better know the difference of lust and love, because there's a huge, huge difference. What the flesh produces is counterfeit to what the Spirit produces, the kind of behavior that Paul tells us about here in Gal 5:19, immorality, impurity, and sensuality.

Now, that's the character of the lost. That's the lifestyle of the lost. Now you see what he's bringing up here is if a Christian seeks to walk after his flesh rather than by the Spirit and begins to experience these things, how shameful that is because this is the characteristic of the lost. To find it in the church is really shameful and divisive to the body of Christ when you find it. Paul says in Ephesians 5:3, "But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you as is proper among saints." He says, man, don't even let them think about the fact that you might be; don't ever let that kind of behavior get inside the church because it destroys our witness. But sadly there are those that will not walk by the Spirit. They will not walk by the Spirit.

Now, many of you are saying, "Well, that's not my problem." Well, hang on, we haven't finished the list yet. I mean, you're going to fall into one of three traps, and you're going to find all these traps right here in this list. And if it's not one of them it may be another one, so be real careful when you point your finger at somebody. Just because that's not your sin, it may be that your sin has not been found out yet, see. When you walk after the flesh there will be sin attached to that, because flesh is sinful in God's eyes.

“Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are immorality, impurity, and sensuality.” It’s the last word in that verse that tells you the whole problem of everything. It’s like the list is put in backwards. The word “sensuality,” this is where it all starts right there. The word “sensuality” is the word *aselgeia*. *Aselgeia*, to make it real simple, means licentiousness. It’s when a believer makes the mistake of thinking that being under grace means he’s free to do whatever he wants to do. There are many people who teach the message of grace, but you’d better listen carefully to make sure there’s a balance in it. The responsibility of walking, and yielded to Him has got to be married to it, or you don’t have the message of grace. What you have is a message of license. And people want to do what they want to do. They think they can.

This is what many people in the church of Rome bought into, and so Paul and others named them the “antinomians.” *Anti* means against and *nomos* means law. These are the people who said, “Oh, isn’t it wonderful to be under grace, party hardy! I can just do whatever I want to do because I’m already forgiven.” And Paul starts off in Gal 6:1 and he says, “What? Do you think you can sin more so that grace might abound? God forbid! Let it not be so!” Don’t even think about it. These were the antinomians. And this is what happens to a lot of people in the 21st century. It’s nothing new. They think grace is a license, and because of that they have no integrity, nor responsibility to walk yielded to the Spirit of God.

Paul’s already told us in Galatians that grace is not the freedom to do as you please. He says in Gal 5:13, “For you are called to freedom, brethren, only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love, serve one another.” Freedom is never the right to do as you please. Freedom is the power to do as you should. It’s Christ living His life in and through us. Oh, how we mess up when we refuse to be willing to be led by the Spirit, just to be willing to be led by the Spirit. When we think grace means we can do as we please we’ve fallen into the trap. This is what happened in Romans and he has to bring it up in Galatians so I have to assume some of them had fallen into this trap. As a result immorality, impurity, are going to flow out of this kind of licentious thinking, thinking I can do anything I want to do is going to breed other things.

If you backwards in the list, in the word just preceding the word “sensuality,” you see how it progresses. You see, immorality is the ultimate end, but that little middle word there many times is not understood. He says “impurity.” You say, “What’s impurity? I know what immorality is, and now I know what sensuality is. What’s impurity?” The word is *akatharsia*. It means to be unclean, inwardly immoral. Now this is the one, you see, when what the person thinks doesn’t have any integrity in it. There’s no time to be in the Word of God. There’s no walk in the Word of God. And we can just live as we please. What happens is their thought lives begin to be affected by the flesh and that means they have wicked, filthy minds, but they come to church and dress up like everybody else and nobody can see the difference right away. You see, there’s other baggage that’ll show up at some place down the line. This is what impurity is.

You know, it’s awesome to me that the Word of God is like spiritual Drano. And you get into the Word of God, you know what that does, what it’s done for me over the years? It just gets all that old garbage out of your mind. You see, if you wake up every morning and try to deal with the sin it’s going to eat your lunch all day long. But if you’ll get up in the morning, focus on Jesus, learn to worship Him by your life and by your will, then what happens is He cleans you out. In the tabernacle when you approached God, God set it up this way: the tribe of Levi over there guarding the eastern gate, so nothing, nothing that was deceitful went inside where the presence of God would be. And when you got inside that outer part of it, the first thing you came to was the altar. That’s where sin is dealt with. That’s where the blood cleanses. But when you went past the altar there was something else, and many people missed this. There was a laver. And the laver was made out of mirrored glass and they would look in the laver and see themselves and they would wash themselves. That’s the purification and the cleansing of the mind. At the altar is the cleansing of the heart; at the laver is the cleansing of the mind.

There are two cleansings. The blood cleansed me from sin and the Word of God cleanses my mind from the garbage and the filth of this world. You see, that’s what Paul’s trying to get to these Galatians. You’ve bought into a system. You’ve gone back to doing it your way and because of this you’re going to start experiencing things you didn’t even know were part of the package. And part of that is the filth that gets into the minds.

I talked to a man once and he says, “Whenever I wanted a woman I went to church.” I said, “You’ve got to be kidding me.” He said, “No, sir. And the way I always baited them was, I said to them a dirty joke and the ones that laughed and responded were the ones that I knew if I spent more time we could have that affair.” That’s the saddest thing I’ve ever heard, but that was said right to me. You see, that’s what I’m trying to tell you, folks, when people walk after the flesh, thinking they can do anything that’s impressive to God other than bow before Him, this other stuff comes with it. They don’t set out to be that way, but this is what begins to corrupt minds of people who are not letting the Word of God cleanse that mind.

Well, the next word is the first word, but really the last word in the process, starting with *aselgeia*. I can do anything; I’m under grace. I mean I don’t have to, and then come impurity and then comes immorality. The word “immorality” describes all illicit sexual behavior. The word meaning sexual acts, that which you do with another partner. Impurity would cover the other, but this is what covers with a partner. And make certain you understand that there are many things that are in this list; incest is in this list. Why would a father ever

do anything like that, or a mother? I tell you why, because they're not walking in the Spirit and probably don't know Christ. Incest, homosexuality, adultery. Now this is the word that the King James throws in, adultery. Now, the word is *porneia*. We get the word "pornography" from it. You wonder why so many believers are falling into that trap. I can tell you straight out if you're not walking and living in the Word of God, allowing His Word to cleanse your mind you will drift right toward that trap if that's the bent of your flesh. If it's not you'll drift to another one and we'll get to that later on. You see, sin is going to happen. When people seek to live religious lives rather than have a relationship with Christ, intimately moment by moment, they will drift to this kind of garbage.

The Textus Receptus, which is the text that the King James comes from, adds that word "adultery," *moicheia*. And *moicheia* is the word when it talks about a married partner choosing to break the trust bond and find sexual pleasure outside of the covenant arrangement. Now, I'm certain somebody who's probably a little naive this morning and you're sitting in here thinking I can't believe he's saying such words. Well, you know what? I didn't write this. I just want you to know that. This is the Word of God. He put the words in there. I'm just telling you what they mean. And some of you are saying that could never happen in the church. "I'm telling you, that could never happen. I know what I'm talking about." Well, you need to wake up and smell the roses. You don't know what you're talking about. Even last night in our service we had people flood these aisles down here with things that are going on in their life. One couple sat there and wept and the lady shared later on, she said, "My husband is so deep into pornography he needed to be here tonight." He was here. You don't think it's in the church?

And I want to tell you something; when they don't see us live godly lives, it just puts more fuel on the fire for them to fall deeper into the trap that they're in. That's why it's so important for those that are mature, those who are willing to walk by faith, to live that life, to give them a contrast, to give them an example, to help pull them out of the trap they have stepped into. Let me take you to the book of 1 Corinthians. A group of people at Corinth that decided not to be willingly led by the Spirit. And Paul wrote to this sick church, this sick church. He says in 1 Corinthians 3:1, "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for yet you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you're not yet able. For you're still fleshly, for since there is jealousy and strife among you"—look now at how the flesh has manifested itself when people will not walk with God; he says there's jealousy and strife among you—"are you not fleshly, are you not walking like mere men? When one says I am of Paul and another says I am of Apollos; are you not mere men?"

You see, Paul was the first pastor of that church. Apollos followed him. And they would rather be attached to a man than they would be attached to Christ. And the indictment comes in the middle of 1Cor 3:2. When he starts off, he says, "I could not do these things." He saying, back when you became a believer, when I went over there to make tents with Priscilla and Aquila and I met them and we went over to the synagogue and Crispus the leader of the synagogue got saved and a church began, he says, back then when you came to know Christ, he said you were a baby, you were just a baby. And it's okay to be a baby when you're a baby. It's okay to want pabulum. It's okay to want milk. It's alright. He said, "I couldn't get you to the deeper levels. I taught the deeper truth, but you couldn't understand it because you were a baby. That's no problem. That's no problem."

Where does the problem come in? He says in the middle of 1Cor 3:2, "Indeed now you are still not yet able." Now, that's your problem right there. You see here they were, they should have been mature like in Hebrews 5. He says "You should be teachers by now," but you're back in the nursery. Somebody's got to teach you the ABC's. And so the indictment came that they had chosen their flesh, and as a result when right back in the nursery. We've already seen in Galatians they did the same thing. They had to go back into the nursery. To choose the flesh is to choose immaturity. To choose to walk by faith is to choose maturity. The mature have nothing to do with age. It has everything to do with the heart that is surrendered to Christ. The indictment again is in that middle verse.

Well, how had sin manifested itself? How did it get into the church? Did immorality get into the church? You haven't answered my question. I'm so glad you're asking. In 1Cor 5:1 says "It is actually reported that there is immorality"—there's your word right there—"among you." He writes to the church. "An immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife." Now it's probably his stepmother. So he's committing two sexual sins and in one act, adultery and incest, and nobody wants to deal with it. They sweep it under the rug as if it doesn't matter. Because, see, when you walk after the flesh with this understanding that grace doesn't matter you can sin more and grace will abound, then that's what happens. This is what happened to a church that didn't understand and they choose the wrong way.

In 1 Corinthians 6 he has to tell them in 1Cor 6:18, he says "Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body." Paul begs with them. Why would he tell them to flee if it wasn't already there? You see, you say, well, that can't happen in the churches. Yes, it can happen in the church; by well-intentioned people who try to do church their way instead of letting God build His own church and getting into the Word and being drawn to our completeness in the Lord, Jesus Christ. Immorality was there right in the midst of the church and so Paul, you understand now why he warns about it in Galatians 5:19-21. In fact, 2 Corinthians 12:21 says, in speaking of this church, "I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity" that's one of the words we looked at, "immorality," that's the third word, "and sensuality," that's our second word, "which they have

practiced.”

In other words, there it was right there in front of them, right there in the church. Immorality is part of the wicked package that we buy into when we choose not to be led by the Spirit. Oh, if we could get this message across, if all of us could just get it in our hearts and our heads and our minds, lust is a counterfeit. That’s all it is. It’s a sexual deception. It’s nothing like love that God produces in our life, “the fruit of His Spirit,” Gal 5:22, we’ll get to later, “is love.”

Oh, what a contrast that Paul draws here. He’s painting a black picture so that we can understand the greatness and the goodness of the grace of God. The Galatians bought the lie, as many believers have foolishly done. They thought they could be impressive to God. And this is a thing that I think that drives a many churches where we are. We have all these different books that are written and all these different themes that are written. I wonder if anybody’s ever going to write a book on the Christ-led church. “Oh no, brother Wayne, that’s not cool, cause this is the 21st century.” They’d bought into a deception that they could do better than letting the Holy Spirit of God do through them what they knew they could never do. Foolish, foolish!

No wonder Paul said to them, “O foolish Galatians!” in Galatians 3:1. That word “foolish” means stupid. Oh, stupid Galatians! Now that doesn’t mean he’s demeaning them. He’s just exasperated that they would do what they did without realizing the baggage that went with it, and now it’s infiltrated into the church. The church is fractioned; it’s divided. All the churches of Asia, southern Asia, southern Galatia are that way. It all started with them listening to the teachers of the Law. That’s where it started. They were running well. Remember Paul says “you were running well.” Then he asked them “Where’s that sense of blessing you used to have?”

It all started when they bought into a formula. And as a result they bought it hook, line and sinker, and now look where they are. They didn’t realize that flesh is flesh and on the flip side is the garbage that they certainly would have never intentionally chosen. They bought a formula instead of walking by the Spirit. I wonder what will be next in our generation. What’s the next book? Anything but Jesus. But what does Paul say? Oh, this is so good. Paul says, “Walk by the Spirit, walk by the Spirit.”

You say, “Wayne, I have a son, I have a daughter that’s fallen into this trap. Can I help them?” Oh, yes! First of all get your own life right so that you’ll have something to say to them. Don’t go tell them something if you’re not living it because they’ve already seen through that. But when you’re walking by the Spirit, willingly led by the Spirit, listen, victory, victory is Jesus overcoming us.

Folks, that’s the victory. Do you understand what we’ve been saying? When you say yes to God you just immediately walked into victory. “Well, Wayne, do I have to go through a 12 week program?” Shoot no! You get on your face before God and say yes to Him. You abandon yourself to Him. And hinging on what you think right now might be unreasonable lies the unexpected blessings of God, the fullness of God, the richness of God. He says, “I want to give this to you.” “But, oh, God, if I come to You all I have to offer You is lustful thoughts and all I have to offer You is wicked flesh.” And God said, “That’s great, that’s great, that’s all I want, that’s all I want. You just give it to me and I’m going to give you back Myself.”

Now which would you like? That’s the message we’ve been preaching in Galatians. That’s the message we preached in Philippians. That is the message that the world is starving for, but everybody’s turning their back on it because they want religion. They want a formula. They don’t want the intimacy of walking with God moment by moment by moment by moment by moment. And we’re standing out in the middle of a storm shouting “Please hear; this is what grace is all about.” It sets you free. And He that sets you free sets you free indeed.

Jesus says, “I’ll offer you Myself. Will you give Me everything that you’re holding on to right now?” “Oh, no Lord! No, I love You, but.” And He says okay, that’s fine. He comes back and comes back and comes back. And maybe in a service like today, maybe sometime in a quiet time, maybe when you’re in the Word of God you begin to sense His preciousness, you begin to sense you can trust Him like you’ve never trusted Him before and God says, “Will you give Me yourself?” And on that day you bow down and you offer Him yourself, and in return you get everything that is real and you’ve been looking for it all along, but didn’t realize you were holding on to that which is fake. That’s the heart of Paul as he speaks to the Galatians. He’s not trying to get on them. He’s not trying to make them feel bad. He’s trying to jolt them into reality. Why would you want that which is fake when you can have that which is freely given that is real?

Galatians 5:20 The Superstitious Deception of the Flesh

Not only does the flesh lead us into sexual deception, which is this crazy idea that grace means you can do whatever you want to do—living grace is never that—but it also leads us into a superstitious deception. I want to make sure you understand something. In the two choices that we have, we have the choice of worshiping God and walking in truth or we have the choice of worshiping our flesh with a good name behind it, and being superstitious.

Well, turn with me to Galatians 5. You say, "Wayne, last week you covered only one verse; are you going to do better this week?" Well, no, I'm going to cover two words. Hey, we're inching our way through this. Somebody said years ago, "Yard by yard, life's way too hard, but inch by inch life's a cinch." So we're going to ease our way through it. Galatians 5, we're going to be looking at Gal 5:20 in just a few moments. Now, let me bring you into the current. Paul has already told us in chapter 5 how, and very clearly, how we're to live the Christian life, Gal 5:16 and 18. Gal 5:16 says—and it's so simple; we make it so complex. We have to have a manual, how do you live the Christian life? How do I be this? How do I be that? It's so simple. "But I say," Paul says, "walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." Walk by the Spirit. Take one step at a time. "Lord, I can't, Lord, You can. Lord, I can't. Lord, You can." Situation by situation in life, walk by the Spirit.

Now, walking by the Spirit, he says in Gal 5:18, should be the desire of every believer's heart, and that's implied; it's not explicit, but it's implicit. You see, Gal 5:18 says that we are to be led by the Spirit. "He that is led by the Spirit," if you are led by the Spirit, he says, "you're not under the law." Now that term "led" means to be willingly led. Now, I want to make sure we contrast these words so you can understand what Paul is saying here. Have you ever had to be dragged by the Spirit? Now, some of you all just won't get honest, but the rest of us are. We haven't arrived. There are days when God has to drag Wayne. There are days, and if you'll be honest, He had to drag you. But that's not the idea. The idea is that we are willingly led. Now when you're willingly led you're constantly pursuing the direction God wants to lead you. You're constantly pursuing His will and His Word. There are times He drags us, but there are also times and it should be all the time that we are willingly led by the Spirit.

Now how simple could that be? We only have two choices in life. Either we are willingly controlled by God's Spirit—which is what it means to be willingly led, to walk by the Spirit, which also means that we're letting God's Word renew our minds, so His Spirit can transform our lives—or we're controlled by our flesh. We've discovered the flesh, haven't we, as we've studied through Gal 5. The flesh has a sinful agenda that will cripple our walk with Christ. "Wayne, where do you get all that stuff?" Oh, I'm so glad you asked: Gal 5:17, "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another so that you may not do the things that you please." And it's in the present tense, "that you might not continue to do the things that you please." It doesn't mean that you'll never do anything, what it's saying is you cannot live consistently before Him. That's what Paul said to the Galatians. Hey, you used to be running well. Who hindered you? Where is that sense of blessing you once had?

See, something happened that kept them from continuing to do as their hearts desired to please God. Both the Spirit and the flesh—now listen carefully—produce a behavior that is easy to determine. Now we're going to see that. We're only looking at the behavior of the flesh right now, but we're going to look at the behavior of the Spirit. And once you begin to realize there's two different behaviors—now listen carefully, two different lifestyles. One who's walking by the Spirit is going to be seen a certain way; one who's walking after his flesh—it may be religious flesh, who knows—but it's going to be shown in a certain way. It's the behavior of individuals that set up our witness before others. Either it sets it up or tears it down, one way or the other. The flesh and the Spirit produce a particular behavior.

Now, sometimes the behavior of the flesh is masked by religious good works. I want to make sure you hear what I'm saying. This is what happened in Galatia. This is why Paul is writing chapter 5 under the inspiration of the Spirit, Gal 5:19-21, fleshly good, which they bought into. The legalizers came amongst them and said "You can do something great for God" and they bought the lie. You can do nothing great for God except bow before Him. And as a result of that they began to think they could do these things for God and that religious flesh masked the rest of what was there.

So many times you come to church and you see good people, good people. What does that mean? You see it's got to be put in light of Scripture. And if a man's character is not what it ought to be with people and the way he relates to others, then whatever good that you have seen is not of God. It's of the flesh. So sometimes religious good can mask the sickness of wicked flesh. Flesh is flesh, no matter how you, what category you put it into, it's still flesh. The Galatians found out that when you bought into their "good side," not God's good, but the good side, the deceiving part of it, you also buy the other part of the package.

I've said this before, but Paul Harvey, what does he say? Now for the rest of the story. Oh, they bought the good part, oh yeah. Now Paul's showing them the rest of the story. When you get into flesh you have got it, the whole package. You can't buy part of it and not have to experience all of it. Now he says in Gal 5:19, "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident." The word "evident" is *phaneros*. *Phaneros* means clearly visible to everybody. In fact, so clear he doesn't even have to finish his list. Paul says you already know what I'm talking about. I guarantee you we really don't have to do Galatians 5 to know what he's talking about, do we? We know the behavior the flesh produces. We know the behavior the Spirit produces. You don't have to be a Harvard graduate to figure that out. It's clearly evident, and that's what Paul says. He said "I'm not telling you something you don't know. It's evident in sexual misbehavior."

Now see some people don't think that can get inside the church. Oh, yes it can. The flesh is so deceptive that it can lead somebody into sexual deception. "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident" he says in Gal 5:19, "which are immorality, impurity and sensuality." Now we saw the last time that the list is backwards. The real culprit, the real product of what flesh produces, is a sense that grace is

license, and that's the word "sensuality." The word "sensuality," *aselgeia*, means, hey, I can do anything I want to do. Well I can do anything I want to do.

I was sharing last night that some people come up to me from time to time and say, "Wayne, do you think it's okay for a Christian to drink?" And they're never asking you a question. They're setting you up. And what they're going to do is defend what they are doing. And I've learned something: you know a man by what he defends. Now remember that. You always know a man by what he defends. You see, we think we have rights. You know, I don't know where we get that. I think in America we must fabricate this kind of thing. But as believers we don't have rights; we have privileges; and they're divine and they're only to the measure and the degree that we choose to walk surrendered to Him. We're servants and slaves of righteousness, love-slaves. We've chosen to be there.

But, you see, a lot of people just don't catch it yet. The Galatians didn't set out to be bad people. They didn't set out to ruin their relationships with each other. They didn't set out to do any of these things. They simply bought into a religious package and as a result they had to experience the rest of what went with it. They didn't realize it wasn't pretty. Without the control of the Holy Spirit of God, without the influence of God's Word daily to renew our minds, we drift into this sensuality. And once we get the idea that grace is the license to do as we please—which is what casual Christianity says today—then that sensuality allows impurity.

Now impurity is wicked mindsets, dirty minds, when people have that they put a suit on or they dress up and they think that they've covered it. No, no; it's inside. Nobody knows it yet, but at sometime it'll show up in their behavior, a mind that is impure. You see, when you walk under grace and you think it's a license then that allows for that kind of thing. You can get away with this and you can get away with that, and you can watch this and you don't have to, you can do whatever you want to do with that kind of wicked mindset.

Well, once the impurity is there you can just about write it down; immorality at some point will take place. That may not have happened yet, so therefore you think, "Well I'm fine." No, he mentions three things here. He doesn't mention one. He didn't say immorality and move on. He said immorality, that's the ultimate. That's the act. But everything he mentions here is sin. Impurity is sin. Sensuality is sin. So it doesn't matter what stage a person's in it's still sin and it's a product of deceitful and damaging flesh. Immorality's the house that every sexual word lives in; incest lives in it, homosexuality lives in it, you, you, adultery lives in it. The King James Version puts the word *moicheia*, which means adultery, into that word. The New America Standard leaves it out. It doesn't really have to put it there, but that's fine because the word covers all of those sins.

But keep remembering they didn't set out to be this way. I want you to know that no epistle is written and just says random things. It's all in the context. Something has happened in Galatia that the Spirit of God has told Paul he needs to address it, and in addressing it this must be what they're dealing with in that area. Any time we replace grace with law all these things begin to take place. When one chooses to buy into his flesh—and it might just simply be "I'm going to do great things for God," that's his attitude, instead of saying, "God can use me as a vessel to do great things through me"—he doesn't realize that this part of the flesh breeds the rest of the flesh, the rest of the story, sexual deception.

Well, today we're going to take it a step further. Not only does the flesh lead us into sexual deception, which is this crazy idea that grace means you can do whatever you want to do—living grace is never that—but it also leads us into a superstitious deception. I want to make sure you understand something. In the two choices that we have, we have the choice of worshipping God and walking in truth or we have the choice of worshipping our flesh with a good name behind it, and being superstitious. Those are the only two choices. You say, "Wayne, I've never thought about it being superstition." Well, you're about to because that's what God says it is. Any time a person chooses to go after his flesh that is superstition. There's more superstition today in the 21st century than there was in the book of Judges, because people are not living out of the Book.

People are not living renewed in their minds by the Spirit of God and the Word of God. If we're walking by the Spirit then we are worshipping God with our surrendered lives. That's what worship is. Walking by the Spirit means you're not walking in superstition. Walking by the Spirit means you're walking in the Word of God and you're worshipping Him with a life that's surrendered to Him. But if we're not walking that way, if we have chosen not to willingly be led by His Spirit in our hearts, then we don't have a clue what worship is all about. We live in superstition. What we have fabricated and called worship is nothing more than the superstitious mindset of men, and this is what Paul is about to address.

We don't realize we have bought into the wicked and deceitful package of the flesh. You say, "Wayne, that's all good, but where is it in Scripture?" I'm so grateful that you want to know. Gal 5:19: "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident," and here they are, "immorality, impurity, sensuality," but look at Gal 5:20, two words, he says, "idolatry and sorcery." Now those two words are what we're going to look at today, and I want to show you the superstitious deception that the flesh leads us into, superstitious deception. These two words, "idolatry" and "sorcery," frame what I call a false worship. The word "idolatry" is *eidololatreia*. It comes from two words. It comes from *eidolon*, which means an idol, and we'll look at that. But it also comes from the word *latreia*, which means to serve. But wait a minute, wait a minute. That word *latreia* is one of the three words translated in the New Testament for worship; in fact, the best place you can find that word meaning worship—and remember, there's no coincidence here—that it means to serve, to

surrender to God, but also that's what worship is.

Worship is not a feeling. Oh, if we could get this through our head. Worship is not a feeling. Worship is a choice to bow down before God. If a man's not serving God through surrendering to Him, then he is not worshipping. This is one of the key words that are used. Romans 12:1 tells us, "Therefore I urge you brethren by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God which is your spiritual service of," what? "Of worship." What is worship? Presenting your body a living sacrifice to God. What does that mean? Galatians, "Walk by the Spirit, walk by the Spirit." Ephesians, "Be filled with the Spirit." First John, it talks about "walk in the light as He's in the light." Jesus said, John 15, "Abide in the vine, abide in the vine." It's all the same thing. That's what worship is. Worship's not an event, worship is a lifestyle. Worship is daily saying yes to God.

In fact, the word is found and translated worship in Hebrews 9:1, "Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary." That's the word, a form of it. In Hebrews 9:6 he says, "Now when these things have been so prepared the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle performing the divine worship." And then again in Hebrews 9:9, the last part of the verse, it refers to the worshipper and uses the same word. It says, "Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshipper perfect in conscience." And so we see that the word *latreia* is the word for worship, and that's part of the word "idolatry."

The word translated "idolatry" has everything to do with one's worship. The only problem is, it's a false worship as we'll show. It's the product of the flesh. And, see, this is not what you intend to do when you step out to do things your way or I step out to do things my way. That's not our intention. But the deceitfulness of the flesh leads us into a license to think any way we want to think and do any way we want to do. But it also leads us into this superstitious understanding of worship which has nothing to do with the Word of God.

I wonder if you've ever considered that there are two kinds of worship. You know, I just would love to take a poll sometime and say, "Excuse me. Could you tell me the two kinds of worship?" And just to see where believers are. They think that worship is just something that they've been told for years is worship. They don't realize that Matthew 15:9, he said they honor Me with their lips, but their worship is in vain. Now, wait a minute. He's talking about religious people. He's talking about the most religious people on earth at that time, the Pharisees. He says that their worship is vain when it comes to Me. You see, there's one kind of worship that comes as a result—and which is worship—of walking by the Spirit. That is worship. That's one kind. I can't worship Him by a song I sing or a sermon I preach. I worship Him by saying yes to Him in the given situations of life. Walk by the Spirit. Walk by the Spirit and saying yes to Him, and yes to His work. That is one type of worship and it's the only kind God accepts.

But there's another kind; it's fabricated by human flesh and emotion. And we have come to understand that as being worship. And it's not, it's vain. You see, just because one cries when he sings or she sings or they hear a good song, or when one gets goose bumps when a preacher preaches a message and uses an illustration that really grabs his heart, just because they do that, that does not mean they have worshiped. No, no. It might be the foolishness of their emotional flesh and the deceit their mind has drawn them in to think that this is worship. In fact, we're going to check the way they treat one another and you'll find out whether it's valid or not. The word "idolatry" describes that which man comes up with in his sincere flesh that replaces honoring God in his life.

But this is not something new. I don't know why in the world we look at it as something new. This has been around for a long time. Man has always had the tendency to want to be his own god. That's why you have power struggles in some churches. You have people that want to run everything. They want to run everything. The Pharisees wanted to rule in the temple and when Jesus would come in they didn't know what to do with Him. They couldn't control Him and that's what man wants to do. He wants to control. He wants to run, he wants to force you see. He wants to be his own god. He wants to control his own life and he wants to control his own worship. That's been around for a long, long time. As a matter of fact, we're looking at Galatians. It's there and that's been quite a while back.

But let me take you further than that. I know it's been around because of the book of Exodus. In the Ten Commandments God made a commandment, and part of the commandments are loving Him; part of the commandments are loving each other. Jesus summed them up as the two greatest commandments and did exactly that way. But in Exodus 20:4, here's what God had to say to a people who had a tendency to create their own god, to come up with their own idea of worship. He says, "You shall not make for yourself an idol or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on earth beneath or in the water under the earth." The very fact that God had to command them not to do it is the very proof-text that they had the capacity of doing it. That's why God had to put the command. Habakkuk tells us how an idol is the simple product of a man's creativity and ability. I mean, we can do it in a committee meeting. Habakkuk 2:18 says, "What profit is the idol when its maker has carved it or an image, a teacher of falsehood? For its maker trusts in his own," now listen, "his own handy work when he fashions speechless idols."

So again, when you take the word, the etymology of the word "idolatry," it has built within it two words, *eidolos*, which is the idol that man's come up with himself through the deception of his mind, and then you have the word *latreia*, which is man's response to that idol which is to surrender to it, to serve it. Can you imagine serving something you came up with? That doesn't make much sense to

me, but that's exactly what the word says. An idol is anything the flesh deceives us into thinking is god, whatever it is.

Idolatry's when man's flesh leads a person to worship that which originated from himself. You see, we've gotten into this thing, in this day and time, we worship our worship. And it depends on what age it is as to what we call worship. We just worship our worship. It's the same thing. Worship then becomes not for God; it's not for God anymore. No, it's not for God. It's for man so that man might be pleased and man might be emotionally satisfied. And that's what the deception of the flesh leads us to. This is exactly what the Galatians did. By buying into a religious mindset of thinking they could actually do anything to impress God with their lives, they just forfeited walking by the Spirit; and as a result of that they captured that deceit in their minds and ended up with a false worship. Serving one's flesh is to worship one's flesh.

You remember earlier Paul said don't ever give an opportunity to the flesh. Any time that I choose to let my flesh-emotion, it may be anger, my flesh-emotion it may be whatever, and I let it rule in my life, I've just chosen to worship my flesh. You say, "What do you mean?" It's the same way, when I choose to do what God says, I have just worshiped Him. When I choose to do what my flesh says, I have just worshiped my flesh. That's idolatry. That is idolatry. It's the sin of God's people since all the way back when He began this whole process.

The perfect illustration of false worship, for instance, is Israel. And you remember, Israel divided into two parts, 10 nations went up to the north and were swallowed up by the Assyrians. And then you had Judah, the two southern tribes, and they were the perfect picture of false worship, what they did. They forsook God. They chose to rule their own lives. Jeremiah 1:16, Jeremiah the lamenting prophet, if you've never read Lamentations. He says to them a message from God. Jeremiah 1:16 "And I will pronounce My judgments on them concerning all their wickedness whereby they have forsaken Me and have offered sacrifices to other gods and worshipped," look at the last part of this, "and worshipped, worshipped the works of their own," what? "Hands." That's what idolatry is. Any time a church comes together and they think they can do it for God, they have just worshipped the works of their own hands.

You know, how many times have we said this? Hopefully in this message it'll come clear to you. In our study of the book of Judges, every time Israel sinned, every single time, it was idolatry. Now this led them to other stuff, but it began right there with idolatry. This is what Paul's bringing out in Galatians.

Now, to get a better understanding of how flesh lures us into idolatry, I want you to turn to Romans 1:21-25. In verse 21, now this is interesting, Paul is going to describe the origin of idolatry. He's going to describe it right here. "For even though they knew God," verse 21 says, "they did not honor Him as God or give thanks." Now, "even though they knew God." What's he talking about? You have to ask the question, how did they know God? I mean, if He hadn't revealed Himself to them in some way, how did they know God? How did pagan man ever know God? He's talking about pagan men, but he's also talking about flesh. And flesh is flesh whether you're a believer or a pagan.

Ro 1:18, he tells you how they knew God. And this is what takes the excuse away from everybody: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness." But look at Ro 1:19, "because that which is known about God"—look at this now, I didn't write this—"is evident within them." How? "For God made it evident to them." Now you say, "Oh, come on, Wayne, how in the world did God make it evident to pagan people who had no idea that there was ever a God? And he tells you, Ro 1:20: "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made so that they are without excuse"—being understood through the things that have been made so that they are without excuse.

One of my favorite people to go back and study from time to time and read is Spurgeon. I love Spurgeon. He's a little bit of a rebel. He was a little bit of a renegade and he said some things in his time that were before his time; really he was way ahead of his time. And he said one time, he said in Psalm 19—I was looking at it one time, just reading through the Psalms according to Spurgeon, just enjoying it—and he said how the heavens declare the glory of God. And then he said a man who looks at the sky and sees the stars and sees the beautiful sunrise and sees the beautiful things that God has made and says there is no god, professes himself to be an idiot! I like him. I mean, you never had to worry about what he's trying to say. Now, go on Spurgeon, tell us what you think.

Man, from the very beginning, from the very beginning, has known God just simply through creation. God has revealed it to his heart. God has given man an ability to know about Him. Now, to know Him is another step, but to know who He is and to know about Him, they knew about Him. They knew He exists. But man, even though he knew God, was not willing to honor God in his life. Now, that's interesting. Verse 21: "For even though they knew God they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations and their foolish heart was darkened."

Now this is where idolatry is birthed right here, when a man is not willing to acknowledge God in his life. Just think, they knew about Him; we know Him; but flesh is the same. When I refuse to acknowledge Him what happens is my life begins to take a downhill slide. That's when idolatry begins right there. I'm no longer walking by the Spirit. I'm no longer willingly led by the Spirit. Man's flesh will never bow to God. I want to make sure you understand that. Man's flesh will never bow to God. That's why we have to say yes to

God and He just puts the flesh to rest. It has its own agenda and it's sinful.

So as a result of not bowing down before God and what that they knew about it, it says in Gal 5:21, "For even though they knew God they did not honor Him as God or give thanks," and look what happens, "and they became futile in their speculations and their foolish heart was darkened." What happened to man's thinking when he refused to acknowledge God? Well, it became worthless. His thoughts are futile. You say, "Oh, come on, look, we fly airplanes. We send rockets to the moon. We've got the smartest people in the world right here in this area." That's true when it comes to the technology of this world; but when it comes to the spiritual things of life and the eternal things that matter, man is a fool who has not acknowledged God in his thinking. And I didn't write this. This is what the Scriptures tell us.

You see, man's thoughts are never God's thoughts. Isaiah 55:8-9, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, My ways are not your ways. My thoughts are higher, My ways are higher." And what happens is, when we refuse to acknowledge Him in our life, which means we refuse to acknowledge His Word and His truth in our life, what happens is our speculations become futile. The word "speculation" is *dialogismos*. It's the word that means reasonings that have finally ended up in conclusions. Man's reasoning that finally led him to this conclusion is futile. Why? Because he did not receive truth, now he cannot know truth. And the result of this pitiful way of thinking is that he loses all sense of morality and integrity is completely lost. Having chosen not to honor God, to reject the truth, then he became unable to receive God's truth. He would not, so therefore now he cannot. And God's thoughts became useless to him. He couldn't understand them anyway. How many times did Jesus veil the truth? He said because it's for them, it's for you and it'll be revealed to your hearts.

Well, having chosen not to honor Him, to reject His truth, then they became unable to receive it and they're "foolish heart was darkened." Oh, when we reject God, folks, we're on our own now, we're on our own. Somebody told me years ago, "Wayne, remember this, you cannot grow anything, you cannot build a church, you can only equip it. You can feed it. God'll take care of the building. God'll take care of the rest of it." But they were so quick to tell me, if you use a gimmick to get people to come, which is the norm of today, then you're on your own. You're going to have to use a gimmick to keep them. And I'll tell you what, until Jesus comes back I will never use a gimmick to get anybody to come into this place. If God draws them, thank you, God, thank you, God, because if you're sent and you went you're put. But if we have fallen into this stupid trap of the flesh of saying, Oh, God, we're going to do something to help you out. We're going to grow this church, we have just bought the whole package of the flesh. That's what the Galatians did. You see, Ro 1:22, "Professing to be wise, they became fools."

When a man puts himself in the place of God—and I believe a believer or a pagan—he's a fool, he's a fool, and the Bible says he's a fool. That's not my language, that's God's language. Foolish, foolish! Flesh works this way, whether a person's saved or unsaved. If we choose not to walk by the Spirit, you see what Romans says we have become, and everything that we come up with, our terminology, our reasoning's, our opinions, our conclusions are based on darkened minds. They're based on thoughts that are so far beneath God's thoughts it would scare us if we could understand His Word.

Since God and His words are rejected because of the stubbornness of man's flesh, he now resorts, now listen, to the insanity of idolatry. Ro 1:23: "And exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds, and four-footed animals, and crawling creatures." And the whole process began when they knew God, but they would not honor Him as God in their life. It resulted in an inability to receive truth and it continued to moral degradation. It continued to where they became their own gods and professing to be wise they became fools. And it ended in the insanity of idolatry.

And look at the baggage that came along with it. Ro 1:24: "Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity"—that's our exact word we've been looking at in Galatians—"that their bodies might be dishonored among them," sexual deception. Hey, that's where it comes from. It's all summed up in Ro 1:25, "For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator who is blessed forever. Amen," Paul says. Don't ever change this because this is right.

You say, "Wayne, this is the 21st century. Would you get off your soapbox. We don't do that today. We love Jesus. We love His Word. We walk with Him daily. We don't do those kind of things. We don't worship the creature. We're not going to have an animal in here and have an animal sacrifice. We're not going to build a golden calf." Careful, careful, careful. I took you to the book of 1 Corinthians last week, and I showed something, and I hope you saw it. These are believers. Paul said you're babies. You won't even come out of the nursery. You know what they did? They started worshipping man instead of worshipping God. What does that say? "Worship the creature rather than the Creator." Some were of Paul and some were of Apollos. Isn't it amazing?

I don't know where I fall in the line of pastors here, but I wonder who you're attached to? "Oh, brother Wayne, I'm of Charles," or, "I'm of Norman," or "brother Wayne, I'm of you." See the problem. You can't be of man. "Oh, brother Wayne, I'm of Calvin." Boy you've really got a problem, don't you. Let me tell you something, when you are of somebody like that they will divide the church. You're of Christ. You're only of Christ. And worship says I'm of Christ, I'm of Christ, I'm of Christ. We do the same thing right here today in the 21st century. It's just put in different terms and we have missed it.

The deception that is in the church of Jesus Christ in the 21st century is absolutely heinous in the sight of God, and we're not even seeing it. We've come up with our own ideas as to what worship is. We've come up with our own ideas what a church ought to be. We've come up with our own ideas instead of honoring God and acknowledging God as God in our life. We professed ourselves to be wise. When God's Word which contains God's ways are rejected in anyone's life at all they have just bought idolatry. There is no gray area. They're in idolatry. Immediately they're in the superstitious deception of the flesh. You see, the Galatians didn't realize that. They didn't realize the cost of buying into the flesh. Well, this is why Paul had to say "O foolish Galatians!" I mean, he loved these people. He gave his life for them practically. He almost died when he was there. And now in their darkened minds, thought they could perfect themselves by their own efforts and oh, how they were paying a huge price for it. This is what happens, this is what happens.

I just beg you this morning—and I love you. I'm not here to get on anybody's case. I sound like it from time to time. There's a difference in anger and passion—I'm just trying to tell you something. I'm trying to stand up in the middle of a road, hold up a flag and wave it as hard as I can till Jesus comes back: the very moment we as an individual or as a church seek to do things based on our speculations, which comes from a darkened mind, not from the Word of God, and we begin to make this religion, we begin to make this doctrine, what we've done is professed ourselves to be wise.

I've heard it said right here in this church, "I don't care what the Bible says, I'm going to do it the way I think it ought to be done." I've heard that said right here. You think we haven't got a problem in the 21st century folks; we better get back to what God says is worship, what God says is truth, what God says is the Christian life. This is what's killing us and I'm here to help you. This is a freeing message if we can just see it and then come back to repentance and say "Oh, God, where in the world have we gone? We've come so far from dead center we wouldn't recognize truth anymore." Foolishness!

Well, Paul says to the Galatians they just committed an act of false worship. That's what idolatry is. The next word Paul uses marries this thought. It is the word "sorcery." It's the Greek word *pharmakeia*. We get the word "drugs" from it, the word "pharmacy." It's the word that means also—now this is interesting. They were very superstitious people at that time. Why? Because they didn't have the Word of God that they would bow to. As a result of it they thought that somebody could look in the evil eye and cast a spell on somebody. In fact, Paul uses that particular word. He's already used it in Galatians. And you're saying, "I don't see any tie here with idolatry and sorcery." Well, hang on, hang on. I'm glad you said that. Look back over in 3:1. I want to make sure you see it. What does Paul say? "You foolish Galatians! Who has," and what's the word he uses here? "Bewitched you." Don't you understand? That is the word for putting a spell on you. That is a superstitious thinking of their past. Now, Paul didn't think that way. But Paul uses, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, a word that they would immediately grasp.

And by the way, I don't have to justify this. Over in 1 Samuel 15, Saul has disobeyed God. He told him to kill Agag and his people. You take all the animals out, everything. You kill it all. But Saul didn't do that. Saul kept Agag and he also kept the best of the oxen and the sheep. And Samuel the prophet comes to him and says, "Hey, have you done what God said?" He said, "Oh, yeah, I obeyed God." And old Samuel said, "Well what's the bleating of the sheep that I hear? The lowing of the oxen. You've disobeyed God. You've been insubordinate." And look what he says in 1 Samuel 15:23. "For rebellion," now, see, I want to show you how these things are tied together. "For rebellion" —which means I'm not going to honor You God in my life. I'm not going to get in the Word and live my life according to the Word. I want to do church the way I think church ought to be done—"Rebellion is as the sin of divination," or in other translations, "witchcraft." You see the tie? And look what he says, "And insubordination"—the unwillingness on a man's heart to say yes to God and acknowledge Him and His Word—is as sin or iniquity and idolatry. I don't have to tie them together; God's already tied them together.

I just want to make sure you understand that you have entered into a superstitious world when you've chosen idolatry. The two are married together. And it's like a drug. It's no coincidence it means to cast a spell or to be under a drug, that word "bewitched" over in chapter 3. It becomes like a drug *baskaino*. It means that the people of Galatia were living lies and treating each other like dogs and they walked away not even thinking a thing about it. And what he says is you're acting as if you're under a drug. It's amazing what you have done to yourself. This is where idolatry has taken you. So with that thought, there is a huge connection to sorcery. The Galatians because of their idolatry were acting as if they had a spell, or as if they were drugged.

Now the behavior of the flesh; remember I told you, the Spirit has behavior, the flesh has behavior, including their false worship was brought on by their rejection of the message of God's grace and they exchanged the truth of God—Christ in you the hope of glory—for a lie, and the rest is history. Their false worship was now their addiction. It was now their habit. A drug addiction, you've got to have it. I've got to have my fix. Is this not what's going on in the 21st century?

I'm telling you, folks, we're right here, and I didn't plan this. This is God's Word. It becomes like a drug in a fix; if I don't get my fix of having it done the way I have come to realize through my darkened speculations, not in God's Word, not in God's Word, then buddy, I'm going to raise a fuss. And it's on every age. I'm not throwing anything at you. I'm just saying it's all of us, every one of us in here. Can't we see it in Scripture? I mean, all I can do is put it in front of you. I can't make anybody understand it. I'm just trying to tell you

that worship is not a feeling, and worship is not for me. Worship is for God. And if I don't have a walk Monday through Saturday, I have nothing to do with worship on Sunday. It's a joke. It's a sham. That's what I'm trying to say.

And I've been there too many times in my life, and, folks, I don't want you to go there. It's an empty place, it's an empty place. Why in the world do we end up fighting each other on this earth and in the church when we're the body of Christ? If we'd just walk by the Spirit we wouldn't understand what worship is.

Well, you see what flesh did. It all started when the Galatians had a teacher come in; I guarantee you he used PowerPoint and he had all this wonderful stuff and he had outlines and he passed out handouts, and they bought it. They bought it. And they exchanged the truth of living grace for a lie, and now look where they are. That's what happens. That's what religious does to cripple the church. They chose to do things their way. Remember what Jesus said to the Pharisees? He says, "Man, the traditions, you've made it law. Just because you've always done something a certain way," Jesus said to those religious people, He said, "that doesn't make it right." Now it doesn't make it wrong, but it doesn't make it right. And He said you've taken it and made it as a doctrine of God. It's nothing more than traditions of men. They chose to do things their way. And as a result they walked into superstitious deception.

Again, we must be reminded Paul's not saying these things to condemn them. And if you ever hear that come from me, I'm not so sure if it is me, then you pray for me, because I don't have a condemning thought in my heart. I love you with all my heart. But I want to tell you something, I love God and I love His Word more, and I'm trying to tell you something. What we have bought into in the 21st century is nothing more than religious superstition. If it's not right here in God's Word, if it is not echoed by the way we behave and love one another, what did they say? Oh, look, look, they must His. Look how they love one another. Jesus said they'll know you're My disciples not by the fact that you have a big church, but by the fact that you love one another, and that's the fruit of walking by the Spirit. It's not there when you walk in the darkened foolish speculations of the mind that has rejected God and His Word in your life.

So I'm asking you a question this morning; what's your worship like today? Is it worship? Is it really worship? What is your worship like? Maybe it's exactly right. And I'll tell you what, when the choir and orchestra and all, when they're doing their thing, I just love it. I love it. But I wonder how many of us truly worship. You see, worship and praise are two different things. Worship is your surrendered walk before God. Praise is the outflow of it. So when we come in here we don't come into a worship service. We have a worship life and we just extend it into this building. And what we do in here is celebrate. We praise. It's the overflow for having worshiped Monday through Saturday, walking by the Spirit, walking by the Spirit, step by step. Lord, I can't. Lord, You can, situation by situation. That's worship. And what goes on in here can be fabricated if we're not careful. If it appeals to the emotions of man, it appeals to his flesh and flesh produces false worship. Worship is not for us. Worship is for Him.

One of these days we're going to take these concoctions of foolish speculations as to what worship is; it has nothing to do with God's Word, we're going to take it and we're bury it under the blood of Jesus and we're going to get to the point that we become worshippers of God. That's what He wants. It's going to start with me. It's going to start with you. Get our minds back to where it ought to be.

Galatians 5:20 The Social Deception of the Flesh

Not only is there sexual deception of the flesh, superstitious deception of the flesh, but another part of that package that we buy into when we go that religious route is the social deception of the flesh. Flesh causes all of our relationships to become fake and counterfeit.

Well, turn with me this morning to Galatians 5. We're going to move into verse 20 today. We're not going to go very far. We never do though, do we? Galatians 5:19-21, and the first part of that says, "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing," and then Paul says, "and things like these." He doesn't even finish the list. He said they're so evident let me just show you some stuff here so that you can get a picture of what I'm saying, but I'm not going to finish the list. You see, we have two choices as believers. Can you think about that? Just two choices. The root of all choices lie in two areas. Either we walk by the Spirit, as Paul talks about in Galatians 5:16, which, implied in Galatians 5:18 is being willingly led by the Spirit, or we are deceived and controlled by our sinful and wicked flesh. That's it. There's no gray area. There's no in between. There's no, "well, I got part of this and I've got part of that." No, it's either the flesh or it's the Spirit controlling our lives.

If we choose to walk after the flesh we've just chosen the whole package, and that's what Paul's doing here. He's trying to say, listen, there's more to the flesh than what you thought. And you can't get part of it without buying into all of it. The reason so many believers—and I've done it and you've done it—have bought into the flesh is because there's a side to it that's very deceptive. I call it the religious side. This is the side of that comes across as, "hey, we can do good things for God," and that's the side that deceives so many believers. This is the side of the flesh that Paul outlines beautifully. If you've ever studied Romans—and remember,

Galatians and Romans are commentaries on each other—in Romans 2:1-3:20 Paul beautifully and carefully outlines what this is.

This is the religious side of the flesh. This is what deceives us into thinking that we can actually make ourselves better by our own fleshly efforts. We can control and we can go to a group meeting and we can do better, we can do better. We can make ourselves better. This is the side of the flesh that tells us we can do great things for God. It's kind of an implied attitude. "God, aren't You glad to have us on Your side? Oh, wow, we are so creative and we're going to help You out." And that's the side we buy into.

This is the side of the flesh that the Galatians bought into. That's why Paul had to say in Galatians 3:3, so clearly, "Are you so foolish," he says, "having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" You see when a believer buys into this mentality, "Well, if I have my quiet time every morning at 4:00, if I memorize 72,000 verses, if I can do this and this and this and this, I'm going to end up being more spiritual." And watch that person, watch that person. If he's doing it in the energy of his flesh everything that we're going to look at in Galatians 5:19-21 begins to surface in his life. Why? Because flesh is flesh. There's a religious side that we buy into. We don't set out to be of this other way.

But then on the flip side of it there's the rebellious side, and those two cannot be separated. You buy this you get that. All flesh is flesh. It's wicked and it's rotten.

Well, we've seen that flesh has its own agenda. Galatians 5:17 he says, "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please." It's an opposition. There's a war going on. My battle's not with the devil, my battle's with me. Simon Peter left his nets, but it was years before Simon Peter walked away from Simon Peter. There's a big difference here. You can do a lot of things, but have we dealt with us? Paul says, "I've fought the good fight." The word there means I've fought the battle with myself and I've let Jesus win over me and I've allowed Him to accomplish through me what He wanted to do. Now I'm ready to go home. That's incredible. The battle we have is with our flesh, every one of us in this room.

When the Galatians, like I said, bought into the religious side of it, they got the ugly side of it also. They got the sexual deception of the flesh. In Galatians 5:19 he says, "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident," and he means right there among them, this was going on. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God, God is allowing Paul to expose what flesh has happened as a result of their decisions. And he says, "which are immorality, impurity, sensuality." You see that's an unclean mind and immoral acts, mostly sexual, but they don't really necessarily have to be. The way we treat people is just as immoral. Always go along with the flesh. Now, to what degree I don't know. It may be this degree or this degree, but it's always there somewhere, when religion, when religion is present. Religion breeds this kind of garbage.

But they also got the superstitious deception of the flesh. That's what we looked at the last time. In Galatians 5:20 he adds two words. He says, "idolatry and sorcery." They bought into a counterfeit worship. You see, the flesh will deceive us when it comes to worship. Idolatry is nothing more than worshipping what man comes up with. Man wants to be pleased. His flesh wants to be appeased, and so man comes up with his idea of what he thinks worship is, and he wants to offer it back to God at the same time, derive his own pleasure out of it. And this false worship becomes like a drug. He has to have it. It's like a fix. If you change what he has come up with to think what he thinks about worship and you change it then it, he becomes very radical in his behavior towards others. The word "sorcery" tells us everything. The word "sorcery" is *pharmakeia*. It means drugs.

In 1 Samuel 15:23 that we looked at the last time, Samuel equated not being surrendered to God, he equated that with idolatry and witchcraft. And Paul does the same thing right here. He said basically what you've bought into, he says to the Galatians, you've bought into superstition. You've bought into something that looks good on the outside and it makes you feel a lot better, but has nothing to do with what worship is in God's Word. It's not a pretty sight.

But today we're going to enter into the rest of Galatians 5:20. And this is difficult ground; I understand that. But I just want you to know I didn't write Galatians, and you have to understand this part of it to understand the other side of what the Spirit of God produces in our life. That's where we're headed. But if you don't know this, then you'll not understand what he's going to say in Galatians 5:22-23. Not only is there sexual deception of the flesh, superstitious deception of the flesh, but another part of that package that we buy into when we go that religious route is the social deception of the flesh. Flesh causes all of our relationships to become fake and counterfeit. Isn't that sad? All of our relationships. I'm not talking about just at church; I'm talking about in the family; I'm talking about wherever you are. Flesh causes counterfeit relationships. This is where you find division in the church or home or wherever it is when somebody chooses to walk after the flesh.

You know, it's interesting to me at any conflict situation, somebody's got to drop anchor and start being what he says he is. And that's the way it is in life. If you choose the flesh, conflict's going to immediately result. But the way you get out of it is to come back to the Spirit. Confess it before God as sin before Him. Let Him cleanse us and then replace us. That's the message. Flesh is never going to get any better. It cannot produce loving relationships. It cannot do it, and it didn't do it in the churches of Galatia.

And so he says, “enmity, strife, jealousies, bursts of anger, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying,” eight things he mentions here. And I know you’re thinking how far are you going to go, Wayne? Well, we’re going to look at three of them today. All of these words describe the relationships in the Galatian churches. Now, when you’re walking by the Spirit—make sure you see the contrasts—when you’re walking by the Spirit, when you’re willingly led by the Word of God and the Spirit of God, now listen, you will be one with your brother—now pay attention—whether he’s one with you or not. Did you hear what I just said? I didn’t say your brother will be one with you. He’s got to be walking in the Spirit to be one with you. But you can be one with your brother. That’s what happens. When you’re walking in the Spirit there’s something that God does to produce His love in your heart that reaches out to other people and you can be one with them. It does not promise they’ll ever be one with you. But when you’re not walking this way, when you’ve chosen the flesh which is the only other alternative, these eight things will begin to appear in your life. And this is what religion does to a church. This is what religion does to a Christian. It doesn’t work. There’s nothing in it. That’s why Christianity is a relationship.

And let’s begin to look at these eight words. They’re so descriptive. They’re so descriptive they really illustrate themselves. The word “enmities” is the word that to me sets the pace for the rest of it. “Enmities,” the word is *echthra*. *Echthra* is a hostile word. As a matter of fact, you can’t think of this word unless you think of hostility, hostile word. It comes from the word *echthros*, which means it has to do and associated with hatred towards somebody. So it’s a hostility and a hatred. “Wayne, I don’t hate my brother.” I hate to tell you, no pun intended, but yes, when the flesh is there hatred is there. Hatred is there. If we had some time just to explore that word, it means to draw a line and not fellowship with other people if they don’t agree with you.

It has all kinds of emphasis in the New Testament. The word *echthra* is a very hostile, hateful word. In fact, it’s associated with hate in Matthew 5:43. He says, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’” Now the word “enemy” is the word *echthra*, but look at the word “hate” is there. But then He says in Mt 5:44 what we’re supposed to do, “But I say to you, love your enemies,” and that’s the word, “and pray for those who persecute you.” So the word means to be an enemy. You look at your brother as being an enemy rather than a brother or a sister in Christ. So *echthra* is a very hostile and a very hateful word.

Can you imagine brothers in Christ considering one another as their enemy and actually being hostile and hateful towards each other? Can you imagine that? “Wayne, that doesn’t go on in churches?” Oh boy! This is what’s going on in Galatia. Oh, but we’re better than the church in Galatia. Well, I know, we really are, I’m sure. Why is it going on is because—now listen—they ignored the truth of God’s changing grace, living grace and they bought the lie. They exchanged one thing for another. They bought the lie that religion offered them and as a result it destroyed their relationships with one another.

Their hostility was even shown toward the apostle Paul. Can you imagine hostility being shown to the very guy that you were saved under and who taught you the message of grace and showed you where to find that sense of joy? That’s why he says in 4:16, and he uses the same word, “So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?” You see, when you don’t want the truth then anybody who tells you the truth becomes your enemy. That’s where the flesh becomes hostile and hateful.

Well, he had to say to them in Galatians 5:16 again, “Have I become your enemy?” Let’s see if we can group these together and see if we can remember them. Two things, first of all is hateful attitudes, and secondly is hostile actions. Let’s put them in those two groups. And that doesn’t mean anything; it just means we can help remember them that way. There’s a bunch of them so let’s see if we can put them into those two groups. Under hateful attitudes that we’ll look at today are strife and jealousy. That’s a hateful, hostile attitude. But then the hostile actions towards one another would be outbursts of anger. “That doesn’t happen in a church, brother Wayne. That doesn’t even happen in my family.” Well it doesn’t? Let me come and find your secret. Outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying. So we’ve got hateful attitudes and hostile actions.

As we go through this list I want you to do me a favor. I want you to draw a circle around yourself; nobody else is in here but just you. Let’s just say just you and me are in here today and God and we have His Word. Now, are these attitudes present in your life today? And if they are, don’t beat yourself up. Understand where they come from and deal with it. That’s the beauty of what’s going on here, is that Paul is surfacing sin; and it needs to be surfaced. Why? So he can show mercy.

Two hateful attitudes he’s going to talk about here. First of all is the hateful attitude of strife. The word for strife is the word *eris*. It’s the word that is a contentious, argumentative and slanderous. It’s not a nice word, not a nice word at all. You say, “Why do you tell us these words?” Because they have special meanings. You can have other words that are similar that mean different things. This is what this means: It’s the verbal expression of a hateful attitude towards somebody else. It’s the characteristic, again, of those who reject the message of living grace, and replaces that message of truth, the exchanged life—not me, but Christ living in me—they exchange it for the lie that religion offers. And therefore strife begins to surface.

Well, when religion replaces walking by the Spirit, when commitment replaces surrender this is what you see. Now, the word “strife” is used of one who has embraced false doctrine. If you want to see where this is, it’s right there. Any time you’re not walking in living

grace, which is the truth that Jesus came to set us free with, if we're not going to live in that then we've replaced it with something. It's a wrong doctrine, and it's governing our behavior and it's used that way. 1 Timothy 6:3, says, "If anyone advocates a different doctrine." Now that word "advocates" means he teaches or he holds on to by the very fact he lives it. "If anyone advocates a different doctrine," now look at this, "and does not agree with sound words;" the word "sound" means saved words, saved healing words, whole words, "those of our Lord Jesus Christ." And didn't Jesus say in John 15, "I am the vine, you are only the branches. If you abide in Me and My word abides in you I will produce much fruit"? If you don't hold to that and understand where it's got to come from "and with the doctrine conforming to godliness," he says, "this man is conceited." He is conceited.

You know what the word "conceited" is? Think about a hot-air balloon. You know what the word here for conceited is? It's *stuphoo*, and the word means a bag of wind. And I thought, how many times do we come to church, a bunch of big bags of wind? That's all we are, because we're not holding to what Jesus said. We're not holding to the message of grace. We're not holding to that which is living and free. We're holding to some religion that we've come up with. And you see as a result of that we become nothing more than a bag of air, conceited.

1Ti 6:4 says, "He's conceited and understands nothing." Now watch, "But he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words." Here's a man that's a bag of wind. He doesn't understand anything, but he wants to argue about everything. By the way, do you know anybody like that? The guy's not walking in living grace, he doesn't have a clue, yet he'll argue with you about it even though he doesn't know. And what's the result of this? And Paul goes on, he says, "Out of which arise envy," now watch, "strife," there's our word, "abusive language," now look at this, "and evil suspicions." Do you realize when you exchange truth for a lie, when you buy into the flesh and think you can actually do something to impress God, you have just become suspicious of everybody that walks? The word is *huponoia*. It means he doesn't trust anybody in the body of Christ. He doesn't trust anybody at all. You see, when—and let me help you understand something; if I'm not trusting God then I'll never trust you—when people can't trust others that are believers in the body of Christ it's not a reflection of them not trusting them; it's a reflection of them not trusting Him. They become suspicious of everything. They don't know anything and they'll argue about everything. Suspicious, evil suspicious.

Strife is the product of one's flesh whose doctrine is wrong. It's what the flesh bought into. He has replaced truth with a lie. In fact, over and over it is used of a person who wants to argue the law. Have you had anybody argue the law with you? "Well, brother Wayne, you could be a better preacher if you did this, this, this and this." Oh, is that right? So, I'm now the preacher, rather than God who lives in me. See, it's amazing how people can put you up under a standard they want you to measure to. And it's used of those people.

Strife shows itself in one who cannot control their tongue. The word *eris* can be translated to speak or to say. But when it's translated that way it's always an argumentative way. In other words, if you say something and then you say it argumentatively or in an abusive way then they use this word, because it's the verbal expression of hostility that you have towards somebody. Why do you have this? "Wayne, I don't understand myself." Yes, you can, if you're not walking by the Spirit, willingly led by the Spirit, this is what results so we can better understand ourselves.

Acts 23:1, "Paul, looking intently at the Council," and I love the apostle Paul. I can't wait to get to heaven just to sit down and talk with him after I spend a million years in Jesus' presence, I want to sit down with Paul. I love him. "Paul, intently looking at the Council, said, 'Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day.'" Now, he's being put on trial there. "The high priest Ananias commanded those standing beside him to strike him in the mouth." Well, evidently they just popped him right in the mouth. Paul doesn't realize he's the high priest and so he makes a little bit of an error here. "Then Paul said to him, 'God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall!'" He says it to the high priest. "Do you sit and try me according to the Law, and in violation of the Law order me to be struck?" But the bystanders said, 'Do you revile the high priest?' And Paul said, "oh gosh, that's the high priest. I didn't realize it. He says in verse 5, "And Paul said, 'I was not aware, brethren, that he was the high priest,'" and then he says, "For it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'" And that's where the word is used. When you say "speak," and it's in a good sense, it's not going to be that word. But when you speak abusively or argumentatively towards somebody it's going to be this word because that's the verbal expression of the strife and the hostility and the hatred that the flesh produces when we don't let Jesus be Jesus in our life. So the word "strife" is a hostile attitude that expresses itself in very hurtful words.

I'm amazed at how many times believers, myself included can do these kind of things and not even see it as sin. I shared with the men on the retreat a few weeks ago, I got under some things, you know. I know the message, the easiest thing I do is preach this message. The hardest thing is living it. Did you know that? If I didn't have to live it it'd be awesome. Just preach it and go to heaven. I mean, it'd be awesome. God's not going to let me stand up here and preach anything He's not going to make me have to live. You know what I've learned, that people that don't understand this, they'll get in the pulpit someday and God will back them into a corner and show everybody they're a joke. They don't have a clue what they're saying. He'll do it. I've seen Him do it. He's done it to me.

A few weeks ago I was with my wife, and evidently I had got my focus off the Lord and gotten under some things, and as a result of it I guess that stuff was building up inside of me. And I'm ashamed to tell you, I turned on her and said some very hurtful words. She's my best friend. She's one of the most precious people I've ever known. The thing hit me, isn't it interesting how the people you love the most suffer the most when you walk after the flesh? That's the ones you're going to slay with your words. And what I said to her wounded her so deep, and I wonder why God even lets me stand up here this morning. I want to tell you something, folks, that's sin. That's flesh. You get your eyes off of God and you're not trusting Him, you're suspicious of everybody, don't trust anybody, you're a bag of wind arguing about everything, don't know anything, and I'll guarantee you before long what's going to come out of your mouth is going to be the most poison garbage you've ever thought about in your entire life and it's going to wound that person to a depth.

It took almost a week for me to even see a healing come back into my wife, and I asked her to forgive me. I've asked God to forgive me. I said, "I don't mean that. I didn't mean that directed at you," but that's what happens when we let the flesh dictate to our lives. And you wished you could reach back in time and grab those words before they came out and pull them back. No way. The one thing you can do is put it under the blood and pray that God will give mercy to you for bear up under the consequence of your action. That's all you can do. He forgives, yes. He cleanses, yes, but the scar is there. That's what happens, that's what happens in the body of Christ.

When we really think, we're arrogant enough to believe, we even know what we need, much less what we ought to do; when that attitude steps into our life as believers you're going to wound people like you never believed. I'm going to wound people like I would have never believed. I thank God for His grace and His mercy. My friend, we're in desperate need of it.

The word "strife" doesn't keep very good company when it's found in Scripture. 2Corinthians 12:20 Paul is dealing with the Corinthian church. It's a beautiful epistle compared to the first one. And he says in 2Cor 12:20, "For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish." In other words, we're going to be on two different poles here. "That perhaps there will be strife." And look what goes with that strife: "Jealousy, anger, tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances." Hostility and hatred in the body of Christ only comes from the flesh." And Paul says, "I'm almost afraid to come because I don't know where you are. I knew where you were when I wrote the first epistle, but I'm not exactly sure where you are now. And I'm afraid there's going to be all this garbage there." This is what happened to the Galatian church. This hostility and hatred is witnessed in the way again, the way you speak to one another in abusive and argumentative ways, very hostile, very hateful.

One time I was preaching in Chattanooga, and I got on a point something around this area, and I threw out an illustration because I had been very hurt over the years and, man, when I did it I did it with vindictiveness. I really was as bad as the people who were saying the things that they were saying by the way I preached it. And I walked out to the car that day and my wife walked up to me, how sweet she is, and put her arm around me. She said, "You haven't healed yet, have you, Wayne?" And I thought, no, I don't guess I have. I don't guess I have.

This is what destroys the unity in the body of Christ. You're not going to have unity because of this or that. Only Christ can unify the body. Only He can. It eliminates any witness that we would ever have for Jesus Christ in the area where we live. Because, you see, out there in the pagan world, flesh dominates. And they live in this every day. Some of you have to work in that kind of environment and you see it every day of your life. When you come into the church, though, you don't want to drag that same stuff. And when people come and see it in here, then they are the first ones out that back door. They don't want to see that. They don't want that. They've got enough of that.

Last week we looked at Romans 1 and we saw how idolatry was originated. Listen to more of the stuff that goes with it. I want to show you where our word pops up. When a person becomes idolatrous, replaces the truth of God for a lie, it says Romans 1:28, "And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness," which is fleshly deeds, "wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder;" look here's our word, here's our word, "strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents." That's an interesting little thing to slip into that list.

"Without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, and unmerciful." You know, the sad thing is that all of us are part of this. It so characterizes the church of Jesus Christ in the 21st century. I'm saying the church in general. And you wonder why people don't flood the doors to hear truth that will set them free. You wonder. And people say, "Uh, I know what you don't know." And for that crazy reason they walk away rather than come to what God's Word has to say.

Well, strife is not a pretty word. That's what you buy into and that's what I buy into. That's what I bought into just a few weeks ago, just by getting my focus off of Christ. And here's the person that's my best friend in this world and I wounded her and she's still seeking to heal. Oh, boy! But then, secondly, the hateful attitude of jealousy. You have to hate the attitude of strife, but the hateful

attitude of jealousy. Now, what is this jealousy? Paul says enmities, which means hostility and hateful attitudes. And then strife and then he says jealousy. The word "jealousy" is the word *zelos*. It's an extremely passionate word. Now, it literally means to be full of zeal. It's kind of like a pot about to boil over. I mean, it's a good word if you use it right, to be heated or fervent towards something. It's an intense word. Man, I love people that are jealous for the right things. It can be used in a good sense.

Romans 10:2 Paul said "For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God." Now there's a negative to it. He says, "But not in accordance with knowledge." A lot of people are that way. They're fired up to go be usable to God, but they don't have any knowledge to go with it. But when it's used in an evil sense, like it is in Galatians 5:20, it carries the idea of bitter resentment, of being jealous of what somebody else has that you don't have.

It's interesting where it appears in Scripture. In Acts the apostle Paul attracted huge crowds. It's amazing to me, everywhere he'd go the people just came and flocked with the message of God's grace. That was what they wanted to hear. In Acts 13:45 these crowds were just gathering from everywhere. It says, "But when the Jews," now by the way, when I say the Jews I'm not talking about all of the Jews. When that term is used it means those religious Jews. My goodness, Paul was a Jew and became a believer and there's a lot of wonderful people under the term Jew. That's not what he's speaking of. He's speaking of those religious ones, the ones who controlled.

He said, "when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy." Now, isn't that interesting? "He's got the crowds. We don't have them." "And begin contradicting the things spoken by Paul and were blaspheming." If you're going to tear the guy down, tear down what he's saying; and if you can't tear him down, tear down what he's saying. They did everything they could do to disperse the crowds. They were jealous. Jealousy, when used in an evil sense, is the attitude that can destroy the harmony in the body of Christ.

One of the secular Greek historians that I discovered in this characterized the word "jealousy" by saying it is "the passion which poisons human society." Now, just think what it has to do within a church body. This church, the word "jealousy" is also associated with our previous word "strife." Six times out of the 11 times when it's used it's associated with strife, and these things build on each other. Somebody's hostile, boop, strife, boop, jealousy. They fit together. They run side by side. Jealousy is the characteristic of a baby in Christ who just won't grow, like the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 3:3. Paul says to them, "Are you still fleshly?" That word has the idea, are you still walking around like babies? And then he said, "For since there is jealousy," look, jealousy and strife, puts them together, "among you, are you not fleshly, are you not walking like mere men?"

You see, a person that won't grow up; remember we've been talking about this in Galatians. Maturity is to walk by the Spirit. The nursery is when I choose my flesh and that's the product of a person who does not walk in the Word by the Spirit. Well, when a person will not bow down to Christ and jealousy floods his mind and his life, it's the product of his flesh he has chosen. Jealousy is what develops when God's power, when God's moving in power on somebody else and He's not moving in power where you are.

I used to preach in preacher conferences all the time, and we were in South Africa. We had about seven of us on a team that were preaching that week, and had 600-700 people from the bush country, and it was just awesome what God was doing. And I preached a message one day, and I've just never sensed the anointing of God any more strongly than I did that day. And I sat down and nothing. Kind of like thinking, "God, did You miss that? God, that was pretty good." Nobody moved. The next guy got up and he preached. And I'll be honest with you, I wasn't really that excited, but you know what happened? The place just broke and revival broke out. And you know what I did? Went back to my room and pouted. "You didn't use me, God, You used him."

You ever been taken to the woodshed by God? And He just had to literally wear you out? Went back to my room and I started thinking those things and God wore me out. I didn't walk to the pulpit the next day, I crawled, because God said, "That's your flesh, and don't you think I'm ever going to bless anything of your flesh. You could be polished, you could be funny, you can be all the other things, but buddy, if you're not filled with My Spirit you're no good to Me than a person that's a lost person on the street somewhere." I had to get some things straight because jealousy set in. "Why are You using him, God, and You're not using me?"

An example of this, God was working in the area of Jerusalem healing people. You know the apostles had those sign gifts that followed them, Jesus and the apostles. And it was for a reason; Hebrews 1 tells you that. They're not a pattern we look for today, but they were going on in that time to validate who these men were. And He was healing those who were sick through the apostles. In Acts 5:16 Luke records, "Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits and they were all being healed." Watch: "But the high priest rose up along with all of his associates, that is the sect of the Sadducees, and they were filled with jealousy." And look what they had to do. They had to put these people in jail to shut them up. It says "They laid hands on the apostles and put them in a public jail."

The moment we choose not to walk by the Spirit, the moment we're not willing to be led by the Spirit of God is the very moment we become jealous of God using somebody else. "Well, I wanted to teach that class. Oh, my feelings are hurt." That's flesh. It says it's hostile, it's hateful. Now we must deal with it if it's there. It's not going to heal. It's not going to get any better. Only Jesus can

cleanse and bring the healing. Well, when this hostile attitude in the flesh is present it causes one to discredit his brother. He has to tear him down to make himself look good, when God's moving on him or on her. Jealousy is the fountain of everything that's unstable. If you find a person that's full of hostility and strife and jealousy you've got a very unstable person. They don't know who they are. They don't know whose they are.

James 3:16 says, "For where jealousy and selfish ambition" —by the way, that's a great definition of jealousy; it just adds to it —"there is disorder and every evil thing." Now the word "disorder" there is the word meaning unstable. Do you realize jealousy is the symptom of instability in the church? A person's unstable in their walk with God. A person's unstable in their understanding of themselves if they have to be jealous that God choosing somebody else. Can you imagine a church where people were fleshly, hateful and hostile, full of strife, babies that are always wanting their own way, arguing and quarreling over nothing, jealous of each other and totally unstable? Can you imagine? But that's what he's dealing with in Galatia. Boy, flesh is not a very pretty picture is it?

You say, "Wayne, I will be really glad when you get to verse 22." Me too! I'm the one that's got to preach this stuff. Like I said, I didn't write it. Don't get mad at me, get mad at Paul. Well, flesh, strife and jealousy, once again when flesh is on the throne of our life; I want to make sure you get a mental picture of this. When we buy into religion; the Galatians didn't set out to be bad people. My goodness, they didn't have a committee meeting and say, I'll tell you what, how can we take a course on how to be jealous, you know? And I'll tell you what. Let's get into immoral living and impure thinking. They didn't set out that way. They just simply bought one side of the flesh and didn't realize they got the whole package with it. When flesh is on the throne of our lives there are no true relationships possible.

If you're a father and want to love your children you better get in love with God, because whatever love you give to your child is not a valid love; it's conditional. But the love He produces is unconditional. There are no true relationships possible. We're suspicious of each other, don't trust anybody. We're jealous, we're constantly trying to tear our brother apart. We're full of contempt. We're always having to win over our brother and we trust, like I said, nobody.

Ephesians 4 says, "Put on the garment of Christ. Put on the garment of Christ." A garment's what you wear. A garment, when you put on, it's your behavior. But you have to be dressed from the inside out. And he says in Ephesians 4:27, "And do not give the devil an opportunity." The word for devil is interesting. There are several words for him in Scripture, but this one is particularly germane to the context. The whole context of Ephesians 4 is unity that the Spirit brings. But his word here is *diabolos*. *Diabolos* is *dia*, through, and *bolos*, to cast. Listen to this. To cast in between and divide; he's the great divider where Christ is the great unifier. He draws us together when we bow and walk by the Spirit. The devil, however, has an opportunity when we choose to walk after the flesh.

Now listen to me. The devil can't be but in one place at one time. If you'll just study Scripture you'll see that. He's not co-equal with God. He was a creation and fell and now he's against Him, yes, he's an adversary. But God has him on a leash, jerk his neck any time He wants to. The devil never does anything God doesn't let him do. He's not co-equal to God. No sir, not in any way, shape or form. If you put him next to Jesus on a scale he wouldn't even show up. So he doesn't have to be around to have an opportunity. What gives him an opportunity is when believers wear the wrong garment, when believers will not walk by the Spirit, when believers will not be led by the Spirit. They are doing his work, they're dividing, they're dividing, they're dividing, they're dividing by what they say and by how their jealous of one another, hateful and hostile. In the body of Christ? Oh yeah. We'll have a divided hostile hateful environment when we choose to walk after the flesh and the devil wins, the devil wins in a sense, temporarily.

Are you walking by the Spirit or are you walking after the flesh? What evidence of hatred or hostility is in your life today? Are you part of the problem or are you part of the solution? Do you understand that when God begins to surface sin it's a beautiful thing? He wants to show mercy. He told Jonah, He said, "Go and preach to Nineveh. Their sins have come up before Me." He didn't say go condemn them. He said go preach to them, because God wanted to show mercy. God always wants to show mercy.

This past week I had a real gift from God. I went down to the Baptist College of Florida. They asked me to do their spiritual awakening week. So I did. Preached the same message I preached right here, no different, and God taught me something. Wayne, don't get discouraged, it's not the word. I preached the same message down there out on a Wednesday morning. We had so many people at the altar broken before God they couldn't even get them in the aisles down the way. And the President said, we've been praying for this for years. And God said, "Wayne, don't stop preaching My Word." It's not in the preaching and it's not in the word, it's in the hearing and the receiving of that word.

What's in your life today? Going home in the car what would your wife or your husband say? Do you see any hostility, hatred? You want to deal with it? You want to be free? This is the beauty. This altar's open. You don't have to tell me. Don't tell me a thing. I'm not going to embarrass anybody in this place, and never will. You come down here, that's between you and God. If you want to do it in your seat that's fine. And you bow your head and say what I had to say the other day when I blasted my wife with things I should never have said, and I said God thank You for showing me the sickness of my flesh. God, I thank You for cleansing that was won for me at the cross. And God, I just ask You now to replace me because I know now how sick, one more time You've taught me, my flesh is.

Galatians 5:19-21 The Social Deception of the Flesh – Part 2

You can't have religious flesh which has some type of humanistic good in it. God doesn't recognize it, but the world seems to. But you can't have that part of it without having the other side of it.

Turn with me to Galatians 5. And we're pushing right along here in Gal 5:20. We actually will get one word in Gal 5:21. Isn't it interesting, or at least it is to me, how all of us—now there's not a single person in here that's a believer that's any different—how we act and how we live when we're not walking by the Spirit of God, when we're not willing to be led by the Spirit and by His Word. You know, what happens is when we choose to do things our way, and it might not be a bad thing; it might be a good thing; we just bought the whole farm. You see, all of it goes together. You can't have religious flesh which has some type of humanistic good in it. God doesn't recognize it, but the world seems to. But you can't have that part of it without having the other side of it.

And that's what Paul's contrasting here in Galatians 5:19-21. Because what he's going to do is when he finishes this list, then he's going to show you the other side. When you walk by the Spirit, Jesus produces His life in us; and what the difference is in the two lifestyles. All the baggage again, that goes with the flesh, we get it all when we choose to do things our way. One of the first things that happens is sexual deception. You say, "Wayne, that'll never happen." Well, now wait a minute. Suddenly there's no sense of morality or decency in the way we behave with one another. All of a sudden it just goes out the window, and you wonder, "What happened? What happened here?"

But not only sexual deception, as we've already looked at in Gal 5:19, superstitious deception. This is so interesting to me. What happens is we become so deceived by walking after the flesh we don't really know what true worship is. It becomes only that which appeals to our flesh. In other words, it becomes that which makes me feel good, rather than that which pleases God.

But what hurts the most is what we've been looking at, and that's social deception, the social deception. When the relationships are ruined because somebody didn't intend to do it, but chose to do things their way and as a result the flesh now is ruining relationships around them. When the flesh is dominating our lives, hateful attitudes—now listen to what I'm saying—hateful attitudes begin to develop towards others in the body of Christ. The last time we were together we saw that Paul in Gal 5:20, he starts with another list there and he uses the word, "enmities." "Enmities" is the word meaning hateful, hostility towards others in the body of Christ. There's literally a hatred and a hostility that grows between us as brothers and sisters in Christ. And, you know, to me that should be an oxymoron. The body of Christ, hatred and hostility; somehow that doesn't seem to go together. And yet we find that in many churches because people just will not walk by the Spirit or be led by the Spirit of God.

Well, these hateful attitudes that we've already seen begin to manifest themselves with the word "strife." That's the next word in his list. We saw that the word "strife" is nothing more than verbal abuse towards somebody, verbal hatred expressed toward someone. What we say about our brother and sister in Christ, or to our brother and sister in Christ, is never meant to build them up; it's only meant to tear them down.

And this leads us into the next word which is "jealousy." Jealousy, we become jealous of the way God is using them and He's not using us. Or we become jealous of the position God has put them in and hasn't put us into, and the list goes on and on and on. Now when these hateful attitudes grow in the body of Christ, then hostile actions towards each other will manifest themselves. And it's so wonderful that God put this in Scripture, not wonderful what we're studying, but in the fact that we can at least understand ourselves. When things don't go the way we think they ought to go and we react rather than respond to the grace of God, these things begin to manifest themselves. Hateful attitudes will manifest themselves in hostile actions towards one another.

Well, today we're going to look at these hostile actions that Paul's going to bring up in the last part of this list and in our social deception that we've been talking about, the hateful and hostile actions. It's the behavior or the garment of the flesh that we saw last time out of Ephesians 4 that does the bidding of the devil. The word "devil" meaning to cast between and to separate. The devil sits back and laughs when the body of Christ does not walk by the Spirit of God. It's as simple as I can put it. When they're not willing to be led by the Spirit of God and by the Word of God the devil has got us. He can't be but in one place at one time and he doesn't need to be. We're doing his bidding when we choose to do things our way.

Well, let's look at the hostile actions that become the expressions of these hateful attitudes that will happen. They will happen; write it down, when we choose to go the religious route. The Galatians never intended to go this route. They only intended to do great things for God, but in doing so all of this baggage followed right along and you begin to understand why people act the way they act. First of all, let's look at the hostile action of the outbursts of anger. That act of hostility, the first one that Paul mentions, outbursts of anger. The phrase "outbursts of anger" represents three words in the English language, but in the Greek language it only is one word. It took three of our words to express this one word. The word is *thumos*. *Thumos* is the word for violent rage that verbally,

usually verbally, that it's expressed towards somebody. I mean, it is rage. There is vengeance in this word.

Now there are two words for anger, and I've brought them up from time to time that we need to understand. First of all is the word *orge*. *Orge* is the word that means anger that is building, it's building, but it hasn't exploded quite yet. I went to the drugstore yesterday to pick up some hearing aid batteries. And these things last until a certain day. And when the batteries go out they never go out at the same time. One will go out and the whole side of your face will just go dead, and you're thinking, now what. The brain has fallen out. So I stopped by the drugstore and I went up and I got some razor, I was going to get some razor blades. I got the batteries and I was going to get some razor blades, but for some odd reason they won't let you buy razor blades anymore where you used to. They're behind the counter. There's a little thing there that says they're behind the counter.

So I walked up and, as I said, a long line, and I waited for quite a while to get there. And when I got up there I said "I also would like to have some razor blades," and I told her what kind and the lady said, "Oh, they're not here, they're behind another counter back there." And she yells out, she says "I need somebody to help me." Well, there's 10 people behind me in the line. Don't you hate that? You have waited forever to get to your spot and then somebody right in front of you doesn't do something right and then it stops everything. And I was standing there and they couldn't find anybody to help and I said "Well, I thought the sign said to come over to the counter." She said "Yes, but they had them here and they moved them over there." I couldn't see it because I had my back turned to it.

But I heard the anger building behind me. You know what I'm talking about? You feel it. You feel it. I could just sense somebody thinking, "That sorry rascal. Why didn't he read the sign to start with?" Now, it didn't express itself. It was building, it was building. And the poor little lady, she was so sweet. She was trying to help me out and it took forever to get those stupid razor blades. And the line by the time I left was probably 25 people lined up behind me. And that was the only cash register they could go to. That's the word *orge*. *Orge* is when anger is building. Now, if that anger had exploded you'd have, you would have really heard it. Somebody would have grabbed me on the shoulder and yelled in my face. That's the word *thumos*. See *orge* is when the anger is building. *Thumos* is when it's exploded in your face. And by the way, there is never any doubt when this anger explodes. There's never any doubt. I mean it can be, it can be manifested in many ways, but you will not doubt when this word is used by somebody.

I was in a deacon's meeting. I'd just been there for a short while. They hadn't had a pastor in two years and many of the men there had taken on themselves great positions of authority. When you don't have a pastor, committees become very strong, and sometimes too strong. And then the next guy comes in and it's a huge problem when you have to overcome the attitudes and the egos that are built during that time. And one particular man got upset with me, mainly because I was there, and replaced him. And he had a responsibility with no accountability, and I was going to put him under a staff member so at least we could start having some kind of accountability there. But I'm upsetting the apple cart, you know. I don't know why, but this follows me everywhere I go.

And so I'm sitting there, and in the midst of the meeting when he found out that he was being put up under a staff member and had to actually become accountable for the first time in his life, he got upset. And you could tell that the hateful attitude had been there for a long time, because, you see, you never have a hostile action until the hateful attitude has already been there. And if you don't deal with the hateful attitude then you're going to have that hostile action. And he got up in the middle of that deacon's meeting, 15 men sitting around the room, and he walked over to me and he began to yell in my face, telling me everything that had been on his heart for a long time. I could tell what he had eaten for supper, for breakfast and for lunch for the past three days. He was right there in my face. I don't know how many times in my life I think, "I can handle some of this stuff, Lord," but He will not let me use an ounce of it. Little pipsqueak, he would sit there and just let me have it right in my face, boom in my face.

Now that is *thumos*. You see he's already had the *orge*. He'd been building and building and building until finally the hateful attitude that was within him had not been dealt with under the blood of Jesus. He turned and the hostile action came forth. That's the word we're looking at here. Understand that it doesn't just happen. It's got to happen as a result of a hateful attitude. You're not going to see hostile actions until you see hateful attitudes that aren't being dealt under the blood of Jesus. And again, it's so interesting to me that the two go together. The hostile action can only happen when there's a hateful attitude.

The word *thumos* is used several times in Scripture to draw a picture for us as to what it is. It is used to describe the hateful and wicked actions of Pharaoh, the wicked Pharaoh who was over Egypt. So many people feared him, but not Moses, and that's what it's talking about in Hebrews 11:27. And Pharaoh is referred to as the king in this verse. And it says, "By faith he [Moses] left Egypt, not fearing the wrath," and that's the word. It's interesting how it's translated because now you understand it. Instead of outbursts of anger, wrath. When you think of the wrath of somebody, now you've got it. It's the same word. "Not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing Him who is unseen." So you see the wrath built into this word.

In Revelation 12:12 it's used to describe the violent wrath of the devil when he's cast down literally to the earth in the mid-part of the 70th week of Daniel, and he begins to, with a violence, pursue Israel. And it says in that verse, "For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the seed because the devil has come down to you, having great," and what does it say? "Wrath," and he says, "knowing that he only has a short time." That's the word.

It's used to describe however, even though here's the devil, the wicked king of Pharaoh, but yet here it's also used to describe the fleshly garment that we can put on when we choose not to be led by the Spirit, not to walk by the Spirit. Ephesians 4:31, it says, "Let all bitterness and wrath." Look at that. There's your word, "and anger, and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice." So consequently, see, flesh is flesh. It doesn't matter if it's the wicked king or Pharaoh of Egypt. It doesn't matter if it's the wicked wrath of the devil, it's the same stuff. It's the same garbage, and flesh doesn't change. It's just been unplugged when Jesus comes to live in our life, shifted into neutral. But when we choose not to be led by the Spirit we shift it back into gear. It has all of its terrible consequences.

It's used to describe a person's angry temper. Second Corinthians 12:20 Paul says, "For I'm afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish, and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there will be strife and jealousy," and look what he calls it, "angry," what? "Tempers;" that's the same word. Isn't it funny how it's translated different ways, "disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances." Notice how that word "anger" or that word "wrath" there is in the same list with the word of gossip and slander.

Now the word "anger," *thumos*, is associated with abusive speech. Boy, is it ever abusive. When somebody gets to this point hateful attitudes can come out with unkind things. But this is hostility that blows up in your face. This is abusive to the nth degree. It says in Colossians 3:8, "But now you also put them all aside, anger, wrath," and he says, "malice, slander." Look what it's associated with, "and abusive speech from your mouth." It's so tragic when a believer chooses to obey his flesh, because the way he views others, particularly in the body of Christ changes from love—now listen to me—to hate. There is no middle ground. Did you know that? "I don't hate my brother." "Well, do you love him?" "Well, no." "Well, then you hate him." Why can't we get that straight? It's one or the other. "Oh no, no, no, Wayne. I'm not quite that far." Well, be real careful when you say that.

This hate will be expressed at some time in a hostile action; it'll be expressed in a verbal abuse, an explosion of hostile action towards others. Things that were simply irritations before, minor irritations begin to change to major conflict when you walk after the flesh. And those hateful attitudes develop an enmity, strife and jealousies, but it isn't long before the outbursts of anger comes forth.

And Paul said, that is exactly the way they act when they will not walk by the Spirit, when they will not trust God, when they will not willingly, willingly be led by the Spirit of God. That's what going to happen. Believers who do not walk by the Spirit will have a hateful attitude towards others that will explode and they will verbally spew their venom on whoever it is that's the object of their hate. Does that sound familiar in any of your lives? I mean in your home. It can be in your home. It can be in the church. This is written to the churches of southern Galatia, folks. These are believers he's writing to, outbursts of anger.

Well the second thing we see here is hostile disputes. Now you see all this stuff builds together. It's part of the package. It's the whole farm. "Enmity, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes." The word "disputes" is the Greek word *eritheia*. It is selfish and hostile ambition in its original meaning. Selfish, now listen to me, and hostile ambition. You see, here's the problem. In English the word means to argue, to argue persistently, to argue irritably. I mean, you want your point and you're going to get it and you're not going to listen to anybody. That's English. But see, the Greek takes it a different way. This is why I'm trying to show you in the languages. It brings color to what the word really means. In the Greek it's not so much what you say, although that's implied, it's the attitude with which you say it. It's the attitude with which a person is doing what they're doing. That's more important to the Greek word than it is to the English word. The Greek seems to be more concerned with the attitude of self-interests that's implied.

Interestingly, in a secular world this particular word was used for a person who only wanted a paycheck. He was only there for hire. If he goes to work at 8:30 he's off at 4, buddy, he punches that clock at 4. If it's not one minute till, it's going to be at 4. "Well, there's other things to be done." "Hey, buddy, you pay me for 40 hours. I'm out of here. I'm only in this job for what I can get out of it." That's what the word was used for. That's selfish interest.

As a matter of fact in Scripture he talks about the hireling and the shepherd. The hireling is not that same word, but it's a good example. When you go to Israel and you see the shepherd leading a flock of sheep, and they have some paint painted on their side like a red stripe, and all the sheep have a red stripe on it, that means that whoever is leading that flock is a hireling. He's only in it for what he can get out of it for himself and he will be gone as fast as he can find a better job. He wants a better pay, whatever it is. He doesn't own those sheep and cares nothing about them. But if you see a flock of sheep walking with a shepherd and there's no marks on it, they know his voice. They hear his voice. They follow him. He can say, hey, and they'll get up and follow him. When they're amongst other thousands of other sheep, his sheep will know him.

You see, this is the idea in the secular world that this word was used. To go along with this it was also used in the secular way of a person who was in politics. I thought this was interesting. It was used of a person who would say whatever you wanted him to say to get whatever he wanted from you. And that was the word that was used in the secular sense. The one who disputes, then, is full of selfish scheming. He's after only one thing and that's his own way. He is interested in only what benefits himself. In fact, it is translated selfishness in Philippians 2:3. In Php 2:1 of that same context it talks about how Jesus is the well of encouragement in

coming along side and giving instructions, etc. And then it says in Php 2:3, it shows you by his command here that many people can do the right things, but they have this kind of hostile attitude behind them. It's actually a hostile action because they really want what's best for them rather than best for you. So he says in Philippians 2:3, "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourself." The word "selfishness" in that verse is our word.

How many believers do what they do for the ego that it brings to them? They only want what they do if the credit for themselves. They're getting out of it what's in it for them. That's the word. Now here's a person not walking by the Spirit of God, to give another illustration of it, consequently he is self-centered, hateful attitude, hateful attitude and those hostile actions may not have shown themselves yet, but he masks all of this by being heavily involved at church. This is what religion allows, folks.

Now watch out what I'm saying. How do you know that these hateful attitudes are in him? How do you know that those hostile actions are even potentially there? Well, one of the ways is he'll argue with you till the sun comes up as long as he can get his way. If you ever differ with him he will argue with you till the sun comes up because he wants what he wants. That's one of the ways you can tell, the argumentative spirit. But another way you can tell for whatever reason is when you take away from him or her what is feeding their ego, whatever it is, they will demonstrate with a hostility that has been there all along. You didn't know it because it was masked by the good works that they were doing. But you take away from what they're doing, buddy, and you'll find out the hatefulness and the hostility that's been there all along. And it explodes, they'll blow up right in your face.

This sinful attitude can mask itself in preachers and teachers of the Word of God. It says in Philippians 1:17, "The former" — speaking of these people that were preaching Christ—"proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition," that's your word right there, "rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment." People actually preached Christ with a selfish ambition. Can you imagine saying the right thing but having the wrong motive? You see, that's a hateful and hostile action, but it's masked with religious good. This is what Paul's trying to show the Galatians. This is where religion counterfeits everything that the Spirit of God can do in a person's life. It shouldn't surprise us.

We saw last week in James 3:16 how there was another word connected. It's the word "jealousy." We read this verse, and when a person is jealous, when a person is filled with hostility like this, they're very unstable. They're very unstable people. They don't know who they are. They don't know whose they are, so therefore they have to defend, they have to get what they want. James 3:16, "For where jealousy," and here comes our word, "and selfish ambition exists, there is disorder." And that word "disorder" means instability "in every evil thing." You want an unstable church? Find you a religious bunch of people. Oh, they're doing "good," but I'll tell you what; they're full of hateful attitudes and it will at some point express itself in hostile actions because they're not walking in a Spirit of God. Only God can produce the good that He requires. When an unstable believer has the hateful attitude of jealousy, it will resort somewhere in the hostile action of disputing to get their own way.

Paul says to the religious crowd in Romans how that this hateful and hostile way of living was going to bring a payback that they didn't expect. Now, he speaks to these people that were religious but lost; understand that. I can understand that. But remember this, there's flesh on both sides, and flesh never changes. There's consequences to sin which is eternal judgment if you're not a believer. But there's also consequences of sin if we are believers and we're not going to put it under the blood. It has to do with the testing of our works, whether they be of wood, hay and stubble or precious stones.

And Paul says to these religious people in Romans 2:4, "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you're storing up wrath." Look at this, "Storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each person according to his deeds to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life." That's what He's going to give them, is eternal life. "But to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness then they're only going to get wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek; for there is no partiality with God."

And the word we're looking at was back in Ro 2:8, "selfishly ambitious." So he puts it in a list and he warns these religious lost people. He says there's a judgment coming, friend. Whatever you call good down here, buddy, doesn't match to what's required up here and one day there'll be judgment. But now flip it over to the other side. If we're believers we've already been judged at the cross, but our works are going to be judged and are being judged and there are consequences of it even right now. And so there's no way to get around it. You're either doing it in the Spirit or we're working after the flesh. So God says there's going to be consequences to this.

Amazing how many believers can do this stuff and be hateful and hostile and walk away as if it's never, it's never going to be dealt with. Oh, friend, God says you better make sure you understand there are consequences to when a person walks after the flesh.

So the hostile action of outbursts of anger and disputing to get one's way. Well thirdly, is the hostility of dissensions. That's a hostile

word. “Enmity, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions.” This is interesting. The word “dissensions” is the word *dichostasia*. It’s the word that means to stand apart from somebody, to refuse to fellowship with them. Refusing to fellowship with another in the body of Christ is an act of hatred and hostility towards that individual. Now, we’ve never looked at it that way, have we? But, see, Paul has to do this to show the Galatians what they’ve bought into and they have to see it as sin. They have to see it for what it is. It’s the word that’s only used here and in Romans 16:17.

Now in Romans 16:17 it’s used in a very interesting way. It is connected with those who teach false doctrine and those who buy into that false doctrine who now, because of the false doctrine, set themselves apart from everybody else and won’t have anything to do with them. You ever had somebody walk up to you and say, “Brother, have you had the second blessing?” And you say to them, “I’ve got the Blessor. What do I need the blessing for? Because in Him are all the spiritual blessings given already to me in Christ.” And what do they do? They stand back and they won’t fellowship with you because you haven’t had what they say they have. They’ve bought a false doctrine and because of that false doctrine will refuse to fellowship with you.

It is so funny to me that people that buy into something that exchanges the truth of God’s life in you would, in whom are all the spiritual blessings, they exchange it for the lie that makes their flesh feel better, and then when you don’t have their experience they will back away from you because that’s what this word “dissensions” is all about. In fact, Romans 16:17 says, “Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you have learned.” And if you’ve ever studied Romans it’s all about grace. As a matter of fact, that is huge about grace. Galatians is Paul writing Romans mad. He says, “contrary to the teaching which you have learned and turn away from them,” because they are going to definitely cause a dissension in the body of Christ.

This passage from Romans associates the word “dissensions” with the word “hindrance.” You know what hindrance is? Hindrance is the word *skandalon*. *Skandalon* is not a trap. It’s translated trap, but it’s not. There’s another word for trap. This is the word that talks about that little trigger to the trap. And by the way, if you put cheese on a trap, throw that away. That’s not going to work. Those things figured it out a long time ago. Peanut butter works good, by the way. But if you’re a mouse and you’re fooling around with a bait that’s on that trap and you get near that little thing that you pull back and it holds the trigger, if you suddenly are eating the peanut butter and it dawns on you that there’s a trigger to that trap you’re dead. You have no more time. I mean, it’s a hair trigger on that thing. He’s got it! It’s got you!

Now, that’s what he says. The hindrance is the actual trigger of the trap and he says these people that have fallen into this trap of false doctrine become those who are dissenters in the body of Christ and dissension becomes a reality. That’s what’s happened in the Galatian church. They bought into false doctrine of these false teachers and those others who didn’t, now they refuse to associate with them. The Galatians had fallen, and dissension was everywhere. When you see those in the body of Christ who’ll not associate with others because of an opinion that they have somehow bought into, that’s exchanging the truth of living grace for the lie of what the flesh can do for God, just back off and pray for them because now you understand. That’s what flesh does. That’s a hostile action that’s built from a hateful attitude. They’ve exchanged the truth of God’s living grace for the lie of human works; now they’re hostile.

The Young’s Translation, which I love to refer to because it’s literal to the Textus Receptus, which is the text the King James came out of, and I love that text, adds this word, particular word we’re looking at, “dissensions,” and he translates it divisions in 1 Corinthians 3:3. He says, “For yet ye are fleshly for where there is among you envying and strife,” and then he puts this word “and divisions. Are you not fleshly and in the manner of men do walk?” And he speaks to believers there. So he makes sure you know that this is very possible. He describes immature believers that won’t come out of the nursery in the Corinthian church. When one’s lifestyle is fleshly, then there is hatred for those who trust God. This results in hostility of dissensions and this results in a split church.

I want to tell you, folks, when you buy into the flesh, help yourself. Everybody’s got their own choice, but you’re going to end up with hateful attitudes, enmity, jealousy, strife, but you’re also going to end up with hostile actions. You’ll blow up in somebody’s face in a second. Why? Because you’re so deceived you don’t even understand what you’ve bought into. That’s the way the flesh operates.

Fourthly, the hostility of factions. Enmity, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions. Now this word “factions” builds out of the word “dissensions,” factions. The word “factions” is the word *hairesis*. It means, it comes from the word *haireo*, which means to choose. It’s a form of religious worship, or of religious ritual—now listen to me—or religious opinion that somehow divides the body of Christ. People that buy into this or that or this and they divide the body of Christ. This takes dissensions to a further degree. We get the word “heresy” from it. It’s translated “sect,” and it’s used to describe the sect of the Sadducees in the New Testament. They were called a sect because they had bought into the fact that there is no bodily resurrection, even though Jesus taught differently. They had bought into the fact that there are no such things as angels. They denied the existence of angels and because of that nothing is ever said that is good about Sadducees in Scripture and they’re called a sect, a heresy. They have set themselves apart. They think they know more than everybody else. They’re called a sect. Acts 5:17, “But the high priest rose up

along with all of his associates, that is the sect of the Sadducees and they were filled with jealousy.” It’s interesting, that when there’s factions in the church it just goes to show who the real believers are. Do you realize?

Now I want to show you something here. Maybe you’ve never seen it. Painful as it is, it is absolutely necessary that these things happen within the church because you’re never going to have a perfect church until Jesus comes back. And these factions, dissensions, etc., are necessary. You say, “Wayne, come on, you’ve been telling that they come as a result of the flesh.” I know, but in 1 Corinthians 11:19 look what Paul says. “For there must also be,” and the word there is *dei*. It means it is absolutely necessary. Watch, “for there must also be factions among you”—oh, no! And then he says why—“so that those,” now listen, “who are approved may become evident to you.” Now you see what he’s saying here. Do you see how religion can sometimes so mask itself you think somebody is spiritual and God has to Himself create a division within the church. Why? So that the real believers will come to the surface and you’ll see who really walks by faith and who really is led by the Spirit of God. I personally don’t exactly like that verse, because it shows me that that’s going to have to happen so that you can know who the true remnant of the church really is.

Well, the believer who walks by faith walks by the Spirit, willingly led by the Spirit will be seen. He’ll surface in the midst of dissensions and factions. He won’t be a part of that. He’ll come forth and he’ll be one who say, “Let’s trust God, let’s trust God.” These factions are the result of man’s hateful attitude which has caused a hostile opinion and that opinion now has caused a faction within the church. Not only will they not, they refuse to associate with you, they’ll blow up in your face if you cross them. The Galatians never realized what they bought into, did they? Now they’re hateful and hostile. Peter says it so well, 2 Peter 2:1, “But false prophets also arose among the people just as there will also be false teachers among you who will secretly introduce destructive heresies,” that’s the word, “even denying the Master who brought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.”

Outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions and finally, envying. Now that’s interesting, isn’t it? “Why would you put that in that list? You’ve already talked about jealousy and my translation sometimes takes that same word and puts it as jealousy.” I know, but you’ve got a bad translation. The word “envying” and the word “jealousy” are two distinctly different words in the Greek text. Make sure you know the difference. Jealousy is a hateful attitude. Envying is a hostile action. The word for “envying” is *phthonos*. Now listen, it’s the pain that is felt and the consequent anger that is conceived in the presence, listen, of excellence or happiness in someone else.

By the way, the word “excellence” in Scripture is that which draws attention to God. People that walk by the Spirit draw attention to God. This is going to cause not only jealousy, this is going to cause the hostile action of envying. It’s the very thing that caused the crowd to turn Jesus over to the crowd. I mean, they wanted Jesus to be crucified and they wanted Barabbas to be set free. Matthew 27:16, “At that time they were holding a notorious prisoner called Barabbas, so when the people gathered together Pilate said to them, ‘Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus, who is called Christ?’” Look what it says. “For he knew that because of,” what? “envy they had handed Him over.” Oh, man, they couldn’t stand the excellence that was in Christ. They couldn’t stand the fact that everywhere He went He drew attention to God. And by drawing attention to God He immediately drew attention to their own sin and they couldn’t stand it. They could not stand it. And so the hostile action of envy came, “Kill Him! Kill Him! Get rid of Him!”

And that’s exactly what happens to you and I when we let Jesus be Jesus in us. God’s going to turn the light on inside of our lives and we’re going to threaten and intimidate everybody we’re around who does not want to walk by the Spirit. However, it’ll also do the other thing, which Jesus did. It’ll attract people to a lifestyle that they know is possible in their own life. See, this is what Paul’s trying to say. He said, this envy that you have, in fact, they even looked at Paul as their enemy and Paul had to say, “Am I your enemy for telling you the truth?” You see, then they couldn’t stand when Paul would come around. His very presence convicted and intimidated them and exposed them just by Christ living in his life. So people will say, hey, get rid of Him quickly.

Titus 3:3 shows that this is the way we used to all live, “For we were also once foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and,” here’s our word, “envying, hateful and hating one another.” And I want to make sure you know the difference.

I worked with a pastor years ago, good friend, but he had a chip on his shoulder, a little bit arrogant—not a little bit, a whole lot arrogant. He thought he was God’s gift to the ministry and everything else and he was five years younger than me. I played ball with him in college and he got all the technical fouls. I didn’t, he did because he was always trying to tell the referee what he should have called. You know anybody like that? And God’s done such a work in his life since that time, but they used to give him a car every year, a car. Can you imagine? And paid his gasoline. He made \$50,000 more than I did and I called him the dump truck. He dumped everything on me. The biggest decision he had was which pair of golf shoes to wear when he went to play golf. And every year he’d drive that car up in my driveway and I would say, “Oh, I’m so happy for you.” Lie like a dog, man. I had such a hateful attitude of jealousy, you couldn’t describe it. I wanted to go over and spit on his car.

Now I’m going to show you the difference between jealousy and envy. I never did anything to try to take away that joy that he had. I was just jealous of it. Envy is hostile action; it’ll do something to get rid of him. It’ll try to tear him down. It’ll do anything you can do to

get him out of there. I didn't do that. Mrs. Bertha Smith came and had revival in our church and I saw that as sin and confessed it and God cleansed me of that. That's the difference in jealousy and envy. Jealousy is a hateful attitude that you may never express, but you feel it. But envy is the hostile action you take to try to rid yourself of that which intimidates you and that which you want for yourself. That's the difference.

O foolish Galatians! Man, they didn't realize what a farm they bought did they? "Well all we did was exchange the truth of living grace for doing things for God." I know, but you bought the whole package, you see. That's what Paul tells them in Galatians.

I wonder what kind of church we are? I don't know. I need to have a time with the visitors and just ask them. When they walk in here do they feel coldness? Do they feel people that are only interested in themselves? Do you walk right by somebody and never even reach out a hand because the Spirit of God has been quenched in your life because the flesh is ruling? But do you go right to a class and teach it? Or you go right to a religious activity, but there's just no life, there's no warmth? You see, that's what happens. On the flip side, boy you let Jesus get a hold. I can't wait till we get to Gal 5:22. Oh, it's going to so change this. I don't like this stuff. I didn't write it. I'm just having to get through it. But the other side is much better.

Galatians 5:19-21 The Sensual Deception of the Flesh

The sensual deception of the flesh. What is it that makes me feel good and it so deceives us we get off the path?

Galatians 5, and I am so excited, because we're finally going to get out of Gal 5:21. Praise God! I don't like this side. I didn't write this. Thank God it's a backdrop for us to see what we're going to see next week, Gal 5:22-23. So far in our study we have seen sexual deception mentioned in Gal 5:19, when he says, "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, and sensuality;" and also superstitious deception which is found in Gal 5:20, which adds "idolatry and sorcery;" and also social deception which is found in Gal 5:20-21, which says, "enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, and envying," and then the King James even adds "murders."

We have found that all of these deceptions are a result of people who don't understand that when you buy into religion you've just bought this whole package. That's part of it. The goal, as we study this, we have to keep connecting Gal 5:19-21 with Gal 5:16-18. It's all tied together and we've got to understand that. In Gal 5:16 he says, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law."

Now what Paul is saying is when a believer chooses not to walk by the Spirit, not to be willingly led of the Spirit, then he's bought into this whole package. The garbage that he would have never chosen intentionally, but he's bought into it because it comes with it. The Galatians never set out to be bad people. I want to make certain we understand that. The sins of the flesh in Gal 5:19-21 would have horrified the Galatians if they had known that this was part of the package they bought when they listened to the false teachers that came to Galatia. You see, when they chose to exchange the truth of God's living grace, Jesus being Jesus in us, Him living His life through us, when they chose to exchange that truth for the lie of working harder for God, for the lie of religion, then they bought this whole package.

You see, flesh is flesh. Flesh can't be any different. If you choose to do the things your way, then you get the whole package. You immediately lose your rest and the gospel message becomes distorted as Paul told us in 1:7. When you choose not to walk by the Spirit you have done a foolish thing and as a result of that you have become bewitched as 3:1 tells us. You begin to live as if you're under a spell. It's almost as if you're being controlled by an unseen power. You're so deceived that now you think that you can sanctify yourself. You know, people begin to think that they can in their own efforts they can perfect themselves as 3:3 tells us. As a result, the experiencing of God's miraculous power working in our midst is gone, in 3:5.

The fact is that you're no longer free. When a person chooses not to walk by the Spirit he has just chosen slavery as 4:9-10 told us. As a matter of fact, you've lost all sense of God's blessing when you choose not to walk by the Spirit as 4:15 tells us. You're so deceived that those who seek to tell you the truth of God's living grace, those who seek to preach it or teach it, become your enemy and you have to fight them as 4:16 told us. You have become a follower of men as 4:17 tells us. By choosing not to walk by the Spirit you've taken yourself out of the sphere of God's grace, His enabling grace, as 5:4 told us. You're no longer obeying the truth and therefore 5:7 brings that out. You now see that your relationships are ruined in your family, at your work and even at church, you begin to bite and devour one another with unkind words and cruel ways you treat one another. That's 5:15. And as we have just studied and gone over, you've fallen into the trap of either sexual deception or superstitious deception or social deception. Now, other than that everything else in your life is fine. This is what Galatians is all about. Galatians is trying to bring some sensibility back to what Christianity is, some integrity back into what our walk is all about.

Well, there's one more area of deception that Paul brings up. I'm going to hit it in our introduction, then we're moving on to something else. And that's the area of sensual deception. He adds in Gal 5:21, "drunkenness and carousing." Now, by sensual I don't mean sexual. It's incredible how many people don't understand the difference here. We've already talked about the sexual in Gal 5:19. By sensual I'm talking about that which simply pleases the flesh and makes it feel good. And, by the way, if you've ever studied Psalms and Proverbs the flesh is never satisfied. It is never satisfied. The word "drunkenness" is the word *methe*. It means intoxication or drunkenness. It's when somebody chooses something on the outside to try to solve a problem on the inside. That's why Paul says in Ephesians 5 we're never to be drunk with wine. You don't go outside to find your answer. You go inside because Jesus lives within us. We're to be filled with the Spirit of God. The word "carousing" is simply the word *komos*, which refers to drunken partying and crude behavior.

Now here's what you have to understand. There are not just two words that Paul said, "Oh yeah, by the way, let me throw these in." Oh no, no. Every word that's here is germane to their culture. Every word is germane to the things they are having to deal with. Because they have bought the religious package, now all this other garbage has come along with it. Both of these words are associated with the immoral orgies that were performed with pagan worship ceremonies in Galatia at the time of the writing of this epistle. And it's so interesting to me. What started these rallies and these orgies and these things that they would come together would be a certain style—I did not make this up; you're going to say "Wayne, you did too." No, I didn't—it was a style of music.

Now, listen to what I'm saying. Now listen to me. Don't get mad at me. I'm just telling you something. It was a style of music that appealed to the flesh of the people that started this whole thing. And as a result it led them into all kinds of activity that is absolutely heinous before God, all kinds of drunken acts and immorality. But it was started by a style of music. I just thought that was so interesting because you know the devil himself knows what music's all about. Remember he was kicked out of heaven. He was the most beautiful, and in charge of the music. You think he doesn't know what he's doing down here. Anyway, it appealed to their flesh and that's what Paul throws these two into the mix.

The sensual deception of the flesh. What is it that makes me feel good and it so deceives us we get off the path? Paul doesn't even finish the list. Gal 5:21 he says "and things like these." He didn't have to finish the list. He started in Gal 5:19. He said I'm going to talk to you about deeds that are evident to everybody. Deeds of the flesh are evident. In other words, you already know these things, but I'm just going to bring them back to your attention is what he was saying. Well, what we've seen in Gal 5:19-21 is a sad picture. It's what happens to lives of people who never intentionally said I'm going this way. They started off this way. "I'm going to do something good for God," instead of letting God do something good through me. And then when you exchange that one piece of the puzzle, and as a matter of fact in Colossians Paul says "I preach the word of God fully. I don't leave any piece of it out," and then he points to the pieces being left out, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. And he says when you leave that piece out, like the Galatians walked away from it, the Colossians just didn't even adhere to it, and as a result this is what happens.

This is what happens to churches that go the religious route. This is what happens to Christians who choose not to walk moment by moment surrendered to God. When they fail they run back to Him and they deal with it as God told them to deal with it. This is the result and, sadly, it characterizes churches even in the 21st century. Churches that seem on the surface to be doing great things for God, but everything they're doing is in the energy of their flesh and will burn at the judgment seat of Christ, the bema, the judgment, not of us, but of our works. It'll be tested by fire and it will not last.

And how do we know that churches that are doing things like this, that look good on the outside, are so corrupt? You look at relationships. Relationships are the litmus test that tells all of us whether or not we are walking by the Spirit or whether or not we're walking after the flesh. When you begin to see the griping, the complaining, the manipulating to get your own way, the gossiping, the slandering, all that we have just studied in Galatians 5:19-21, it's obvious that people have bought the package of the flesh. When you leave out the truth of living grace this is the mess that you end up with, and it's everywhere.

One more time, sexual deception, superstitious deception, social deception and sensual deception; that's the package right there.

Now, what I want you to see in this message is the warning that Paul gives in the last part of Gal 5:21. If you'll look down at Gal 5:21, he says, "envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these," and then look what he says, "of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." Now here's the question: is Paul saying that if a believer participates in any of those things, if he ever commits these sins at any time, does that mean he will not inherit the kingdom of God? And a fear begins to cloud over us.

Well, let me just share with you that is not at all what he's saying. However, let the Word of God encourage your hearts this morning. Three things that I want us to see that I think will help us. And Paul's warning is very strong. Let's make sure this morning that you truly are a believer. He's not saying if you're a believer and if you sin in any of these areas you'll not inherit the kingdom of God. That's not what he's saying. You cannot lose your salvation as you'll see. Three things; first of all, I want you to look at the struggle that is common to all believers.

Now, it doesn't matter what age you are. I'm only 68. Some of you look at me as your son. That's alright. And I appreciate that, because my mom and dad are dead. I'll take you on any day. I'm glad that you've taken me on. I love that. Some of you maybe could be my grandparent; I don't know. But it does not matter, if you are a 150 years old you're still going to have this struggle. It is a struggle to every believer until the day he sees Jesus or of the day that Jesus calls for His church when we get a glorified body. This is a struggle that is common to all believers. Gal 5:21, "of which I forewarn you," now watch the wording, "just as I have forewarned you."

Now, the term "of which I forewarn you" is the word *prolego*. It means to tell somebody something in advance, to give them a heads-up. The word *pro* is before, *lego* means to tell or to speak or to say. Now Paul uses this word as a warning. He's saying don't play around with this list that I have just given to you. It's no fun. Don't you go back to this type of thing. Now Paul wants them to know something before it's too late, before they're in the trap and then they've lost the joy and the sense of blessing that they'd had. The word *prolego* is used in 2 Corinthians 13 to help you understand. It means to tell somebody in advance. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 13:2, "I have previously said when present the second time and though now absent I say in advance," he says, "to those who have sinned in the past and to all the rest as well, that if I come again I'll not spare anyone." Oh, Paul's a little upset. And he goes on to finish his thought. But that little phrase "I say in advance" there's your word *prolego*. I'm telling you something beforehand. I'm coming and buddy you, here's my warning to you.

The word is used in 1 Thessalonians 3:4 when it says, "For indeed, when we were with you we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction and it came to pass as you know." So it means to tell somebody something that you want them to know to spare them. It's a warning that you're giving them in their life. So Paul warns them in advance.

Now listen, but it's about something that he had previously warned them about. He says, "Of which I forewarn you," now look, "just as I have forewarned you." Now by saying, "just as I have forewarned you" indicates that the sins listed in chapter 5:19-21, now listen to me, are the same sins he had to warn them about before. Now we don't know when the before was, but I believe it's before they got saved. And what he's saying is in the culture of the Galatian people these sins used to dominate your life. Now I'm having to come back and warn you about the same sins again, all because they wouldn't walk by the Spirit of God.

Now I want us to understand something this morning. The sin that you struggled with before you were saved is going to be the sin that you'll struggle with after you get saved if you choose not to walk by the Spirit. Now remember what I'm saying. If you walk by the Spirit you won't fulfill the desires of the flesh. You can forget everything I'm saying right now. But if you walk by the flesh then you're going to struggle with the same sin that you struggled with before you got saved if you choose not be willingly led by the Spirit of God. Our flesh does not change one bit once we're saved. Now, I wish it would, but it does not. What changes is that the power of sin is shifted into neutral when Christ comes to live in us. The power of sin is disengaged, but it's potentially just as evil as it once was.

Now this is the common misunderstanding. Turn with me to Romans 6 and I'll show you. Romans and Galatians are commentaries on each other. And Romans fills in the blanks. You see, Paul's writing Galatians and he's mad. And so it just takes him six chapters to say what he's going to say. Romans, he wrote the same message, but it took him 16 chapters, so the teaching is really in Romans that fills in the gaps of Galatians. Romans 6:5, "For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin."

Now what Paul says in Ro 6:5, when we're saved we are totally identified with Christ's death and with His resurrection. And as Christ has come to live in us He has taken the power of sin and literally broken its power. He has unplugged that plug. And it's a beautiful truth. And how did He come in? He came in by faith. Now the power of sin by faith is disengaged. When we choose to surrender to Him, when we choose to bow before Him that disengages the power of sin at salvation. Now Paul shows us in Ro 6:6 that, but he brings out a point we need to see. "Knowing this, that our old self"—and as the King James says, "old man"—"was crucified with Him in order that our body of sin might be done away with so that we should no longer be slaves to sin."

Now let me explain some terms there. The term, "old self or old man" is what you and I were as believers in Adam. You see, when you go out into the world people are in two classes. They're either in Adam or they're in Christ. There's no middle ground. And if a person's received Jesus, he's in Jesus. If a person hasn't, he's still in Adam. And if you're in Adam it means you're devoid of the Spirit of God. And, you see, a lot of religious people are still in Adam. They have never been born from above. And that's part of the problem. They can't see; they can't understand; they can't walk, because they're still in Adam. Now he says that's the old man. But when we become a believer, Christ comes to live in us, which makes us in Him a new creature. So all of that old man stuff is gone as far as you and I are concerned. We can never be what we used to be. That's over with. The moment Christ comes to live in us He completely revolutionizes our life and we can't go back and say that we're the old man anymore.

Well, Ro 6:6 continues however, and shows us about the body of sin that we still live in. It says, "In order that our body of sin might be done away with." And to me that's a very unfortunate translation. King James does it even worse. He says, "It's destroyed." It

gives us the idea that the power of sin completely ceases to exist when Christ comes to live in our life. I take issue with that. You always check me out. The word for “done away with” is *katargeo*. *Kata*, down, *argeo*, to idle: to idle down. It’s to disengage. It’s to unplug the power. It’s to be put into neutral. But it does not mean cease to exist as if it’s blown away in oblivion. That’s not what he’s talking about.

I’ve used the illustration so many times of a person driving a straight shift car. And most of you know very well what I’m talking about. When we first started driving they didn’t have automatic transmissions. I mean, you were a sissy if you had an automatic later on. But they had that straight shift. And I remember trying to start my daddy’s car without the clutch being pushed in and being in gear. It’ll jerk a knot in your neck, you know. And you finally learn after a while, push the clutch in. Why do you do that? So that you unplug, you can disengage the power of that transmission.

Now when Jesus comes into our life He pushes the clutch in and puts the power of sin into neutral. Now He lives within us. He has given us His divine nature and as long as we walk by faith, walk by the Spirit, willingly led by the Spirit the power of sin stays in neutral. And that’s what Paul’s trying to say, that our fleshly body is a body of sin. He said “that the body of sin might be done away with,” or shifted into neutral. Now when you wake up in the morning—I’m telling you, I didn’t write this—look in the mirror and say, “Good morning, body of sin.” And you’ve just understood where your problem is the rest of the day. It’s not going to be your preacher. It’s not going to be the music at church. It’s not going to be somebody that you work with. It’s not going to be your wife, your husband, or your children. It’s going to be your flesh that you’ll deal with. It’s going to be my flesh that I will deal with. It’s a body of sin.

So our flesh is not eradicated in its power. It’s simply shifted into neutral. There’s been a new nature to come to live in us. Our heart and His heart have become one heart. But the tendencies of the flesh are still there, very potentially harmful. If we choose to obey our flesh instead of walking by the Spirit then what we have just done, we have shifted it back into gear, let the clutch out, pushed the foot down on the accelerator and now sin is operating once again in our lives. You say, “Wayne, I don’t believe that.” Then throw Galatians out of your Bible. Throw 1 Corinthians out of your Bible. These are believers who have shifted sin back into gear.

The Galatians were learning now the hard lesson, what happens when you don’t walk by faith. It’s going to happen in your life. We need to understand this. Don’t be confused when your flesh is tempted by the same things that once controlled it. Your flesh hasn’t changed. Temptation is not sin. Now we understand that. Temptation is not sin. Sin is when we yield to the temptation. We’re going to be tempted till Jesus comes back. Sin’s going to roar in our ears. But if we’ll walk by faith then it can roar all it wants to. It has no power in our life. The only time sin can have power in our life is when we choose to do things our way. Then we have fallen into its trap. So don’t be surprised when you struggle with the very thing that you were delivered from. But here’s the problem. When you fall into its temptation, when you yield to it, as we’re going to see in 6:1, how to deal with brothers who do that; when you yield to it then that’s God’s way of letting you know you’re no longer walking by the Spirit of God. You have chosen to exchange that truth for that which appeals to your flesh. And as a result of it now you have bought the package.

Paul, in talking about the lifestyle of sin that he calls the garments—and it’s the lifestyle; it’s not the old man, it’s the lifestyle of the old man—in Ephesians 4 makes this statement in Eph 4:22, “that, in reference to your former manner of life,” not your former nature, your former manner of life, “you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted, in accordance with the lusts of deceit.” You see, my flesh today is not only potentially evil, if I choose to shift it back into gear, it’s worse today than it was back then. It is consistently being corrupted by the lusts of deceit.

So Paul warns them about the same sin that once dominated their lives. “I forewarn you, but I’ve already forewarned you.” And it’s the same thing now as it was then, because when you choose flesh it does not change. It’s the same thing. It’s a struggle we all have. Now, if we choose not to walk by the Spirit, it’s the struggle we all have—make sure you hear me—if we choose to walk by the Spirit then Christ replaces us and we walk in the victory He’s already bought for us. We don’t have to get it. We receive it. We enter it. And you can throw the rest of what we’ve been talking about away because it won’t bother you. But if you’re not walking by the Spirit these things are going to start appearing in your life. And we need to understand that it’s a common struggle to all of us when we choose not to walk after the Spirit, not to walk by the Spirit.

Okay, the common struggle to all of us. But the second thing I want to show you in this verse is the common confusion to all of us, the confusion that is common to all believers. He says, “of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you,” now watch, “that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Now, that’s an interesting statement. “Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” has caused confusion to the whole body of Christ, at one time or another, it’s caused confusion to all of us. To better understand this, the word “practice” is our key word. As we study it, remember that context always determines a word. There’s another word that can be used and it means the same thing, but it’s a little different. But the context will always tell you where you’re going with a word.

The word “practice” is the word *prasso*. It’s very important for us to understand. This is the word that simply means to habitually practice something or a host of things as a lifestyle. That’s all it means. Now, it can be used a good way; it can be used in a bad

way. It is used in positive sense of how we should all live in Philippians 4:9: "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." Now practice these things. It should be the lifestyle. It should be the habitual lifestyle of a believer, and Paul has to encourage them to live this way.

However, the most I have found the use of the word is in a negative sense. And it's used to describe the lifestyle, not of a believer, but of an unbeliever, one who is lost, does not know Christ. Let me give you an example. After giving a similar list to what he does in Galatians 5 Paul does this in Romans 1:18, and he starts going through a list of conditions, or characteristics of lost people. And he gets down to Ro 1:32 and it says "and although they know the ordinance of God, that those," here's our word "that practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them." It's used twice there, "practice them," *prasso*. This is what Paul's talking about in our text. He's saying, if this is the lifestyle of a person then that person doesn't know Christ. That person doesn't know.

You what the biggest fear I have is that we may have people in one of our services that they come and they come and they do and they do, but they have never bowed to receive Jesus in their life, and their lifestyle is habitually lawless. And that's what he speaks of when he uses that word *prasso* both in Romans and also in Galatians.

Paul is speaking of the lost man in 5:19-21 who practices these sins. This is the characteristic of his lifestyle. And, you see, he said this lost man will not inherit the kingdom of God. The continual ongoing deliberate practice of the sins listed in Galatians 5:19-21 mark the unregenerate man. Scripture always assesses a person's character not by occasional actions, but by habitual actions. That's how you know if somebody is saved or he's not saved. Those who habitually indulge in sin show themselves to be enemies of God and they will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Now this is the heart; even though John uses a different word in 1 John 3, this is exactly what he's getting at. So many people read this and don't understand it. It says in 1 John 3:4, "Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." He means practice habitually, a lifestyle. "You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him." And I think it's interesting here, "No one who abides in Him [habitually] sins. Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. No one who is born of God practices sin [habitually], because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother."

Now, Paul has the exact same thought that John had in his epistle over in 1 Corinthians 9. And he says there in 1 Corinthians, "Or do you not know that unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor idolaters, nor effeminate" —and by the way, effeminate does not mean that he doesn't drive a pick-up truck and chew tobacco. That is not what it means. And I will not tell you what it means in here. You'll have to look that one up for yourself—"nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God."

Now does God love a person who has swindled or been a homosexual? Yes, He loves the homosexual. But does He hate the sin of homosexuality? Absolutely, and with a vengeance. And the person who habitually lives in any of these lifestyles, he says, is not going to inherit the kingdom of God. And I didn't write this. I don't know how many times people have gotten mad at me for what I've said when I didn't say anything except what thing, this Book says and it's almost as if, well, "Wayne, we're mad at you." Don't be mad at me. Get mad at God. This is His Word, folks. It ought to rattle us where we sit.

It's a serious thing to call yourself a believer. And people that live habitually in a lifestyle of sin will not inherit the kingdom of God. But there is a difference in a person who is struggling with a sin in his life than a person who lives lawlessly in sins in his life. Do you see the difference? In fact, if you don't, then you need to study Hebrews 12. It says "lay aside the [singular] sin that does so easily beset you."

Okay, now, we've got a pretty good group here this morning. Let's go down and find out what sin easily besets you. You say, "Well, I don't struggle with immorality." Well, big deal. What do you struggle with? "Well, I don't struggle with covetousness, no sir." Well, I'll tell you what your problem is, it's pride. And you're going to have to deal with it. You've already told me what your sin is. All of us struggle in an area of sin. Why? Because the flesh wars against the Spirit, and the Spirit wars against the flesh.

But there's a difference in a person who lives lawlessly and a person who struggles with a sin in their life. John says in 1 John 5:16, "If anyone sees his brother" that's a believer "committing a sin" committing, not once, but repeatedly, present tense. But John refers to a sin, singular, not the lifestyle of lawlessness. The lawless man who lives habitually in the characteristics of what we've seen in 19-21 does not know Jesus from a hole in the ground. In fact, Paul is going to say in 6:1, if you don't understand this, "Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted." The warning is that any believer can fall into the trap of any sin at any time if he

chooses not to walk by the Spirit.

But what Paul has been referencing in 19-21 is not a believer struggling with a sin. He's been telling you the characteristics of the lost. The word *poieo* is the normal word used for a believer, although in 1 John he chooses to use that word and the context, as I said, renders the meaning for doing a single act. Normally *poieo* is a single act, but *prasso* is a habitual act. So Paul is not saying that if any of these sins have ever been committed in your life since you were saved, that you are not lost and will not inherit the kingdom of God. He is warning them—and this is my understanding; this is my take of Galatians 5, and you just take it and weigh it yourself—he's saying to these Galatian people trying to wake them up, "if you continue not to walk by the Spirit, not be willingly led by the Spirit of God, having an intimate relationship with Him moment by moment, day by day, understanding that you can't and only He can, then you'll have a lifestyle or you'll have something in your life that makes you no different in appearance than the lost man who lives next door."

And I'll be honest with you, this is what's killing our churches. It's not the people out there; it's the people in here that will not live what they say they are. And when you go out there they could care less. They could care less. The thing that ought to draw people into this church is not what style we have of worship or anything else. What ought to draw people in this church is the changed lives of believers who walk by the Spirit of God and somebody standing in a restaurant, as they did to my wife the other day, said "Listen, I'll be at your church next Sunday." This is what ought to draw people.

We live in a day when numbers are everything to people and we've given up the very thing that draws people. The thing that draws people is a surrendered life, not anything else. You use a gimmick to get people here, you'll have to use a gimmick to keep them. I've said that before. So the answer is still walk by the Spirit. What's the answer? Walk by the Spirit. Walk by the Spirit. Be willingly led by the Spirit of God.

But there's one more thing I want to add to this message. And this is from my heart to yours. I want to encourage your heart. The struggle that is common; we're all going to struggle with sin and we're going to have a particular sin we're going to struggle with. And it was the same one that defeated us before we got saved. I guarantee you it comes full circle when we choose not to walk by the Spirit. But the common confusion is that Paul is talking about the fact that if we do struggle with it, and we do fall into its trap, we're kicked out of the kingdom. No sir! No sir! But the final thing I want to share with you I think it'll balance it all. The promises that are common to all believers. This is my heart to yours. I just love you and I'm not here to beat anybody up. I'm here to raise a red flag and say, guys, we've got to understand how to live in these days.

All through Scripture we see that we have assurance of our salvation. I've been challenged on this everywhere I've ever been, so it doesn't matter. Somebody says, well I want to challenge. Well, get a number and get in line. I mean, they're everywhere. They follow me around, have since I've been in the ministry. Those who try to confuse us will use certain passages to throw us off track. For instance, they'll use Hebrews 6. I've spoken at the Cove for four years, and when I got there they said, "Wayne, will you be willing to take questions from the people at a certain session?" And I was stupid enough to say yes! Bad mistake. You ever noticed when you have an open question and answer session it's never germane to what you're talking about? It's always going to be in about five different areas with the most controversial questions ever been asked in Christianity and you're supposed to answer them.

One person stood up and said I believe in Hebrews 6 that is says you can lose your salvation and he read the verses and you've been very familiar with them. I'm not going to get into that. And I thought to myself, how ridiculous. Do you understand when you study Scripture it's observation, interpretation, application? Have you ever observed the book of Hebrews? So the book of Hebrews is not how you can lose your salvation. The book of Hebrews is about who Jesus is and I'm glad we don't even know the author. And when you get to chapter 6 you're in a context of chapters 4-10 that's talking about the high priesthood of Jesus. It has nothing to do with a person losing their salvation. It's talking about the fact that He when He died, friend, this can't happen. This is totally hypothetical. You cannot lose your salvation if you're in Him. He can't come back and die again. In fact, the author of Hebrews even turns and says I've even got better things for you people. He clears it up.

Some people even take Galatians 5 that we've already studied where it talks about the fact that those who seek to be justified by law or circumcision, have fallen from grace. And they say, see there, you can fall from grace. That's ridiculous, the sphere of grace. What he says is Christ cannot help you if you're going to choose to go the way of the Law. The way of the Law is the way of the flesh. That's why he says in chapter 5:18 if you're walking by the Spirit, then you're not under law. But you choose the Law, you've just nullified the enabling power of God in your life. He's not talking about being kicked out of the kingdom of God. I'll tell you, the verses are a dime a dozen and they're everywhere. Buddy, we better start getting honest with what Scripture teaches. Grace is grace. And if you can lose your salvation throw grace out the door, because you don't even understand it.

But I want to share this with you. Are there any verses we can rest on, Wayne? Is there something I can take home with me today and stand on that gives me assurance of my salvation? Now I just want to answer you first of all, are there any verses? In fact, if you cut out all the verses that assure you of your salvation you will truly have a "holey" Bible. Let me give you a few that God has ministered to my heart, just from me to you, as a love gift to you. This is what God has spoken to my heart about my assurance of

salvation. And I read the verse a while ago, but didn't emphasize this word.

Romans 6:5, "For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection." That word "united" has a little preposition. Eighty percent of Greek words have a preposition in the front of them, not like English words at all, and that determines what that word means. There's two prepositions for "with," and the "with" that is used here is not the "with" of association. It's not that word *meta*, because if it was we could lose our salvation; you could use this very verse to show that you could lose your salvation. But there's another word, *sun*, and it's the first word of the preposition that's used put right in front of the word *phutos*. *Phutos* means two people, or two things, are grafted together and they come up as one. And the word *sun*, by being put in the front of that word, means they can never ever be separated. God has so baked Himself into our life nothing can separate us from the love of God. I will never leave you, nor forsake you. I'm a part of you. You've been born from above. That's one of the things that spoke to my heart.

The devil tries everything he can do to make me doubt my salvation. I don't know about you. Another verse is Romans 8:1. Paul in chapter 7 has talked about his struggle, the same struggle we have, the struggle with his flesh. And in Romans 8:1 he says, "Therefore, there is now," now that you're a believer, "no condemnation for those who are," and what's the last three words? "In Christ Jesus." You're either in Adam or you're in Christ Jesus. If you're in Christ Jesus there is therefore no what? Condemnation. Now quit worrying about it. If you've received Jesus He's come to live in you. Not only are you in Him, He is in you, Romans 8:1.

And one more. Ephesians 1:13. I want to show you this: "In Him you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed you were" what? "sealed in Him with" what? "the Holy Spirit of promise." And what is He? "Who is given as a pledge" the earnest "of our inheritance with a view to the redemption of God's own possession to the praise of His glory." You know what that word "sealed" means? It can be a barrel or a container, that's got a top on it and they've sealed it around, but you can break that off. The better word for sealed, and the better understanding, is the authentication it gives when you brand somebody. You ever try to take a brand off a cow? Once you are branded, you are branded, you are authentic. What makes you authentic? The Holy Spirit of God has come to live in your life. The Spirit of Christ has baked Himself into your life and is never going to leave you.

Now how long can you be sealed for? Ephesians 4:30. "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." I've already been redeemed. I know and you're being redeemed. I know. And you shall be redeemed. And when you see Jesus one day and you get a glorified body that's when you don't have to worry about being sealed anymore cause you made it all the way through.

Hey, this is just three passages. We could do a series on assurance of salvation. So Paul is not talking about losing your salvation if you fall into the trap of sin. What he's talking about is you're not going to look any different than the pagan neighbor that lives next door and you'll have no witness whatsoever.

Manly Beasley made the statement one time. He says, you know, if the devil could somehow rip me out of the kingdom of God, then first of all the devil would have to pry the hand of Jesus off of me. Remember, it says we're in His hand, because we're hidden in Him who was in God. He says if he could somehow pry Jesus' hand off of me—because He holds on to me, friend; it's not me holding on to Him, He's holding on to me—if you could pry that hand open, then he'd have to move, he'd have to go through the blood to get to me because I'm covered by the blood of Jesus. And he said if the devil could get through the blood you wouldn't have to worry about him anymore because now he's a saved devil. Anybody that'd go through the blood is cleansed by the blood. He said, buddy, do you know, because you know, because you know that you're saved today. And if you do, don't you dare let somebody else or an isolated verse challenge that.

That's what grace is all about. I want to encourage you. I love you. Keep on walking by the Spirit and you won't even have to worry about anything I've just said. The only time you worry about not being saved is when you're not walking by the Spirit of God. You're not letting His Word renew your mind and His Spirit transform your life. It's the only time.

Galatians 5:22-23 The Fruit of the Spirit – Part 1

Okay, let's begin. Let's dig into this and just see what God has to say to us to encourage our hearts. First of all, the essence of this fruit is love.

Galatians 5. I am so glad that we're finally getting to Gal 5:22-23. Man, it's been tough going through Gal 5:19-21. I'm glad we're here. Paul has shown us very clearly that when one exchanges the truth of Christ living in us, living grace, when we exchange that truth for working for Him—in other words, that religious mindset—then we've just bought the whole package of the flesh. As we've learned, the Galatians never set out to be bad people. They didn't set out to do these things. But flesh is flesh. It's got a religious

side to it and sometimes that's the deceitful part of it.

Well, all of these things begin to bombard us once that choice has been made: sexual deception, as we've seen, superstitious deception, social deception, sensual deception. All of these are products of the package of the flesh. It doesn't mean that you're involved with all of these things at one time, it just means that these are the traps now opened up to us when we choose the flesh.

Well Paul, under the inspiration and influence of the Holy Spirit, has painted for us a horrid, black backdrop in which now we can build. Now, it's ugly, it's not good to look at; however, it's useful. You see, in doing so, by creating this black backdrop of what the flesh produces, he now is ready to contrast the beauty of what God wants to do, the brilliance of what God wants to produce in our life.

We had a jeweler at my last church. And he came to me one day as I was attempting to try to explain the difference in the contrasts, and he said, "Wayne, it's so simple." He said, "A jeweler knows that if you're going to enhance a beautiful stone, you get the blackest black that you can find". I don't know what; I don't know how you get any blacker than black, but he said get black on black. I mean just as black as you can get it and you set it up. And then he said you take your stone and put it up against it and take the brightest light you can find and shine it on that stone. And he said, "The blackness of that backdrop will enhance the beauty of that stone." That's exactly what Paul's doing. And what a contrast he's drawn for us in Gal 5:19-21 and now Gal 5:22-23.

Let me read them for you and just listen to the contrasts, listen to how the brilliance stands out of what God produces when we walk by the Spirit. Gal 5:19-21 talks about the flesh: "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident," now listen to them, "immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions," and then he says, "envying, drunkenness and carousing," not very pretty. But look at the contrasts: "But the fruit," in Gal 5:22, "of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control; against which, such there's no law." See the contrasts? It's so beautiful when we walk by the Spirit what God produces in our life as in contrast to what the flesh produces. When the deeds of the flesh are put up next to the fruit of God's Spirit, really they appear pitiful.

The first thing we want to notice in Gal 5:22 when he says "the fruit of the Spirit" is that little word "fruit." Now, that word "fruit" is the word *karpos*. It's that which originates from something. It's the particular consequence of a certain source, and that's what he's talking about. Years ago I was in the ACA, American Camping Association. I was one of the 11 ministers in the nation. We had to go through all kinds of tests to pass to get into our instructorship in that thing, and one of the things was a survival week in Arkansas. One of the things we had to do was to identify different kinds of trees. I think there were about 15 or 20. I'm not real good at that. And you had to bring the bark back and explain what kind of tree it was by showing the bark.

Well, I had done about 19, whatever the number was. I was right up next, I had one more left and I couldn't find one. I couldn't; if I found one I didn't know what it was and I topped the hill and I looked, and thank You, Lord, thank You, I saw an apple tree. Now, how do you think I knew it was an apple tree? There was an apple hanging there, and I went over and I got some bark, but I also pulled the apple off and stuck it in my pocket, because I had a feeling that was going to come up later on. And I walked back and I identified each of the barks that I had and I finally got to that last one, I said that's an apple tree. And the instructor, knowing me, he said, what kind? And I reached in my pocket and pulled out the apple and I said that kind.

That's what I'm talking about. I don't remember exactly, specifically what kind that was, but that particular tree put out that specific brand of apple. That's exactly what Paul's saying. He says the source of this fruit, the source of it, the particular fruit that's being talked about in Galatians 5:22, the source is the Holy Spirit of God. He says the fruit of the Spirit. Now the fruit that Paul speaks of is what the Holy Spirit produces in our lives, now listen, and it's that which we cannot, we could never produce ourselves. You see, the world has this idea of love. but what God is going to show us is what He creates is on such a unique level above anything we could ever think about, that it automatically shows it's specifically produced by the Spirit of God.

Now another thing to notice in this verse is the word "fruit" is singular. In other words, what Paul's explaining here in Gal 5:22-23 is that all nine characteristics that are mentioned here are in a cluster. Now, what do I mean? It means you can't have one without having the other eight. If one's missing you don't have any of them. They all have to be there at one time. Now, this is different than the deeds, plural, of the flesh. Because you might be suffering from the trap of immorality, or the suffering from the trap of this or that. It doesn't mean you're suffering from it all at one time. But here, if you have the fruit produced in your life, everything must be there. If anything's missing it's not there.

Now we must remember the thrust of this epistle. And the key verse in the whole epistle is Galatians 2:20. He says, "I have been crucified," how? "with Christ, and it's no longer I who live, but," what is, what is the key? Who lives in me? "Christ." Where does He live? "In me." Now, Christ in the person of His Spirit—now listen carefully—lives in us to produce His character in us, so that others might not see us, but they would see Him. All nine of these characteristics, the fruit mentioned in Gal 5:22-23 reflect Him in our lives. It's His character. It's who He is. These are not just qualities. This is Christ that lives in us. This cluster, this fruit that He produces in us is His character reproduced into our lives.

Now as we seek to walk by the Spirit—what does that mean? Willingly led by the Spirit—then the fruit is Christ living in and through us. Now make certain you understand. There's a couple of things, before we get into the text, I want to make sure you understand. First of all, the flesh cannot produce this fruit; because many of you are going to say, "Love, well, I love." Well, now wait a minute. What we're going to talk about is love that you couldn't begin to touch in a minute. This is what God produces in you. "Well, I have joy." It's not a frivolous thing. This is something only God can produce into your life. And then secondly, we're only going to look at three today, some of you are going to walk out of here and say hot dog, man that's happening in my life. Careful; there are six more that we're going to look at later on. Make sure all nine of them are there. If one is missing, just one, then you don't have it, you've been deceived. Only God can produce His own character in our life and you can't separate the attributes of God at any one time. So if one is there they all have to be in place.

Okay, let's begin. Let's dig into this and just see what God has to say to us to encourage our hearts. First of all, the essence of this fruit is love. That's what he's talking about. The whole list is built off of that first word. When Paul or Peter make a list, always look at that first word that they mention, because in every list that sets the tone for the rest of it. It is this love that fulfills the requirement of God's law. Did you know that? If you're worried about the law just quit worrying about it. Walk by the Spirit and it's taken care of. Look in Galatians 5:14, "For the whole Law is fulfilled in," how many words? "one word," one word and he gives you a phrase to give you a clue as to what that one word is. He says "in the statement, 'You shall [what?] love your neighbor as yourself.'" So what is the one word that fulfills the law? Love. And it's this love that He produces that literally fulfills the law that He requires. This love that is required by the Law can only be fulfilled by the One who gave the Law and the One who came as the God-man and fulfilled the Law and now lives within us. You see, when it's Christ living His life in and through you, then His Law is being fulfilled because He's the One who's producing the love that fulfills that Law.

Now, the word "love" here is a very powerful, powerful word. It's the word *agape*. You may have heard that word before. The word *agape* does not describe a feeling or an emotion, it describes a choice, a resolve. We're too prone to listen to Nashville. When Nashville says "Falling in love with you," you know, we think that's love. We grow up thinking this way. We think it's an emotion. Well, it may involve emotion, but that's not the root of the meaning. The meaning is we've made a resolve, a choice. It's not a feeling. The word *agape* refers to the resolve God produces in us that causes us to want to do for our brother or sister in Christ spiritually that which is best for them, no matter what it costs us. Jesus said in John 15:13, "Greater love hath no one than this than one lay down his life for his friends." That's the greatest example, and He is that example. There's none that compare. Jesus, by dying on the cross, was the greatest example of the resolve, and of the follow-through of this kind of love.

This love is not necessarily what others may want to have done for them, but it's definitely what they need. Now, this is important. It's only within this love—now think with me—it's only within this love, when you're operating in the power of the Spirit, that you even know what the need of somebody else is. Do you realize if you're not walking by the Spirit you don't really know what the need of somebody else is? You think you do, but you don't. Only the Spirit of God, if He gives you the resolve to meet the need and then enables you to do it, then He's got to give you the discernment to know what that need is to begin with. So, no committee, unless they're surrendered to Christ and on their face before God can ever begin to discern the needs of anybody. Only God knows the needs.

Now, you see, felt needs are everywhere. And this is the trap that a lot of people fall into, trying to minister to felt needs. No, sir! Felt needs are not real needs. Real needs are what only God knows and only He can give us that discernment to understand. When one resolves in their hearts to spiritually do what is necessary and needed in another person's life, and he has within him that resolve to carry it through no matter what it costs him, that's a totally foreign concept to our flesh. Our flesh doesn't think that way. What we do is what's best for us, never what's best for somebody else. When this love is present in a person's life, it can never point to them. It has to point to God who lives in them.

So many people have asked me, "Wayne, how can I know? I really hear what you're saying. How can I know that I'm experiencing Christ in my life? How can I know that it's not me, but it's Christ living in and through me?" This is the evidence. This is the only evidence. This is the clearest evidence that He's living in and through us: when we love, in the sense we've just described it, one another.

Now John, in his epistle, 1 John, tells us quite a bit about this love. He shows us clearly that this *agape* love is the character of God. In 1 John 4:8 he says, "The one who does not love does not know God; for God is [what?] love." He is love. Now you think about that. He's not like love, He is love. He is the divine resource of what we're talking about here in Galatians 5. So in contrast, he says the one who does not love does not know God. The word "know" is *ginosko*, which means does not know Him by experience. So in contrast, the one who does love in the truest sense of what we've just described the word is one who is experiencing God in his life. So how do you know you're walking in the Spirit? How do you know that God is replacing you with Himself? It's when this love permeates and motivates and surrounds you and initiates what you do in life. It's when He gives you that divine discernment as to the need of somebody and then gives you that grace and that enablement to meet that need and then to follow through with it.

Well, as we've said before, Christ is the truest example of this love. Nobody can touch Him in being the example of that love for He is love. In 1 John 4:9 he says, "By this the love of God was manifested in us that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him." Now, that last phrase is what I want to capitalize on, "that we might live through Him." He came that we might have His life and His love in us. Isn't that incredible? Remember the life inside the coat. Do I have to do that again? The coat cannot do anything of itself, but when you put it on, there's life inside of the coat. He came that we might live through Him. Now that word "through" is a little word *dia*. And *dia* means by the means of Him. He is the source. He is our resource. He's the well that we drink from. He's our divine resource.

Now in 1Jn 4:12 John shows us that when we are experiencing Him, when we're living by the means of Him, we will love one another. I mean, it just happens. That's just the way it's going to happen. And this is the way we know that God abides in us. He says, "No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another God abides in us and His love is perfected in us." Then John ties this love to the Holy Spirit of God. And he does it this way. He says in 1Jn 4:13, "By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit." Now, it is this love, God's very love, that Jesus prayed to the Father would be in us. Do you realize that? Do you realize we're an answer to Christ's prayer to His Father in John 17? Every time we see this love manifested in our life we are an answer to His prayer. John 17:26, Jesus praying to His Father and He says, "I have made Your name known to them and You will make it known so that," look at this, "so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them and I in them."

The very love with which the Father loved Jesus, the same love which He loved the world, the same love that Jesus demonstrated when He went to the cross is now in us because He is in us. So it's not just a quality; it's who He is. So the way we know that Christ is living His life in us, the way we know that we are participating in His life, is that we experience His love for each other. By choosing to buy into the lie of the false teachers, which the Galatians did, the Galatians did it, the Galatians no longer experienced the love they once had for one another. That's a sad thing. By a simply choice to do things their way they no longer experienced that love that they could have for one another.

Let me ask you a question. How many times in your family, in your life, have you chosen your flesh and all of a sudden the love just went out the window? Has anybody experienced that besides me? Isn't that a terrible thing? When here it is that God has offered us that and He says, listen, you can experience this and by a simply choice we choose to shut it down and as a result we don't sense that intimacy and that oneness and what God wants to give to us. Instead, as we have just studied, we sense "enmities, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying." They could have experienced the fruit of His Spirit working in their life, His very love, but they chose not to.

A beautiful picture about how a church ought to be is found in 2 Thessalonians 1:3. It says, "We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brethren." And you know what? Paul doesn't normally do this, but, boy, he's very grateful for these people. "As is only fitting," he says, "because your faith is greatly enlarged." This was a church that was not well taught. It grew up overnight and was a very precious group of people "and the love of each one of you toward one another," listen to this, "grows even greater." Wouldn't that be awesome if in five years we'd be five times or fifty times or 500 times the love that you see today? It would enlarge and enlarge and enlarge and grow and grow and grow. It can only do that to the measure and the degree we are willing to walk by the Spirit, walk by the Spirit. Then we experience this divine resource and He produces His love in us. So the essence of this fruit, this particular fruit that the Holy Spirit alone can produce, is this love, the very love of God Himself.

Now, the word *agape* does not have the definite article in front of it. You say, "Wayne, what does that mean?" Let me tell you what it means. I've got my notebook up here. I've got my Bible up here, and if I just said I'm going to pick up a book, then I can pick up either one of them. I can look around and find something else. I can pick this one up. I mean, it doesn't matter. But if I put the definite article in front of it, it means I'm going to pick up the book, which means I'd better find out which one I'm supposed to be picking up. It identifies something. But when you take that definite article out of the Greek and you leave it alone, it qualifies something. In other words, Paul is not defining. He's not trying to define the source of this, because we know it's the Holy Spirit. He's trying to show what this love is all about. That's why he puts eight characteristics that follow it, that manifest and help us understand better what this love is all about.

How do you know you're experiencing the love of God? "Well, I love going to my brother and whatever." No, no. All these other things have to be built into that so that we can understand what this love really is. He wants to qualify the essence of God's love within a believer. So he lists for us the characteristics that will be present when the love of God is manifest in our lives. Now, again, you cannot separate these characteristics from this love. They form a cluster. If you think you've got this love and one of them is missing, I'm telling you, you can never take out an attribute of God. This is His character. They all have to be there at the same time.

So let's look now at the inward effectiveness of this love. We've seen the essence of the fruit is love. Now let's look at the inward effectiveness of God's love. Gal 5:22, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love." What's the next two? "Joy," and what's the next one? "Peace." By the way, I just want you to be in your Bible. That's my heart, folks. Take this Book. This Book is a part of your life. It's spiritual food. And when I say something to you it's one thing, but when you read it in God's Word, you don't have to deal with me

anymore, you're dealing with Him. So bring your Bible and look in the Bible when we turn to different Scriptures because it'll speak to your heart.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, and peace." Joy and peace reflect the inward effectiveness of God's love in us. The Greek word for "joy" is the word *chara*. It's the word for deep abiding and inner rejoicing. It's a beautiful word. It's completely independent of outward circumstances. Now, listen to me. It rests totally in God's sovereign control. It's the joy that Jesus Himself had when He was here on this earth. Even though people would want to shame Him and spit on Him and if you've ever read 1 Peter 2, they reviled Him, but He did not revile back. He kept entrusting Himself to the One who judges righteously. It's that inner joy that He had knowing His Father, that the situation was in control.

In fact, He refers to this particular joy as "My joy" two times in the New Testament. It's not just a frivolous quality, it's who He is. Once when He had just told His disciples how to bear fruit in John 15, which was, He said the only way to bear fruit is to abide in the vine and to allow His words to abide in them. And then He said then you can produce fruit. The branch can produce fruit not of itself, it has to be abiding in the vine. And then in Jn 15:11 He says these words, "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy"—I love those words. It's not just joy. It's My joy, His joy. It's who He's, we're experiencing—that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be made full." You see, our joy is never made full until we are experiencing His joy and that's what He wants. And He says "If you'll abide in Me," as my word "and let My words abide in you, you will produce much fruit."

It's interesting that persecution seems to be the environment in which this marvelous characteristic of His love is manifested. In His high priestly prayer, again in John 17, Jesus asks His Father to give us His joy, knowing that we would be hated in this world. By the way, do you know we're hated in this world? And it's not us, it's Christ that lives in us. They hated Him, they're going to hate us. And it says in John 17:13, "But now I come to you and these things I speak in the world so that they may have my joy made full in themselves." And the very next verse tells why. He says in Jn 17:14, "I have given them Your word and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, even as I'm not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world"—no, Father, don't do that—"but to keep them from the evil one."

And so just in the implication here the joy seems to be made even more manifest when the world is shaming you and when the world is reviling you and when you're being persecuted and you run to Him and you bow before Him and you surrender to Him and you say, "God, I want to walk by the Spirit," and the Spirit of God produces the character of Christ and He gives you a love, even for the people that are persecuting you, but gives you and inner, deep inner sense of wellbeing, knowing that the situation is under control. When His love is present is when His joy that enables us to pay whatever price that is necessary for the sake of others, regardless of how they treat us.

Years ago when I first started pastoring, I pastored in a southern state. And I remember about three weeks into it I was topically preaching at that time. I didn't really know how to study. I was learning and I'm still learning. But I didn't know how to study and so I was using other people's messages. And one morning I preached on David and Bathsheba. I didn't get into the immoral part of it, I got into the fact that he was taking R & R and he should have been out in battle and that's when all the problems stepped into his life. And I did not know that in the church there was a very prominent man who was having an affair with another woman in the church that was not his wife and everybody knew it, but I didn't. Nobody bothered to tell me about it. He's sitting in the service that day and I'm talking about David committing immorality, Oh, gosh.

And so three days later, after I preached that message I get a phone call in the office, and I answered the phone. I said, "Hello." He said, "Preacher!" Boy, you can tell people that have been walking with God just as, the countenance on their face, the joy in their voice. And he said, "Preacher," and I said, "Yes sir." He said "Get off my back." I didn't even know what he was talking about. And he said, "You know that message you preached Sunday. You know good and well you were referring that at me and you were throwing jabs at me." He said, "I want you to know I've got peace with God with what I'm doing. You better get off my back. Do you understand me?"

Well, back in those days I didn't know what it really meant to walk in the Spirit and maybe if the Spirit had been in charge of my life maybe I'd have done this anyway. But finally he got quiet enough, and I said, "Would you just be quiet for a second?" I said, "If you're through just shut up. I've got something to say to you." I told him on the phone, I said, "I'm not afraid of you or anybody like you in this town. You spread the word. Do you understand me?" Bam! He hung up the phone. That was my first three weeks I was there. It was real exciting. I mean, it went downhill from that point. Every time I got in the pulpit I'd be chasing something and trying to shoot them down. If I found a problem during the week I'd nail it on Sunday.

And I had a little shack outside behind my house, a little shack and they fixed it up and made a little apartment out of it and a place for me to study. Everybody called it the "Shack Out Back." And I remember many mornings being out there after I did a radio broadcast, I remember just being so overwhelmed by the way people were and I just got down on my face and prone on the floor, and I'd just cry out to my Lord. And every single time God would so tenderize my heart with a love for even that man who treated me that way, that even with the love came a joy and a sense of wellbeing that when I got up off my knees and I walked outside that

place God had already given me the victory. And I didn't even understand all the terminology of what we're talking about right here in Galatians 5.

Do we understand that? Do we understand that all of us are human beings and our humanity and our flesh is what we deal with every day? But if we'll just run to the presence of God, if we'll just get on our face before Him, God says, "Thank you, thank you, thank you for coming to Me, because I'm the only one that can help you. Nobody else can help you. Now let Me replace you. Let Me fill your heart with a love that you didn't even know could be there for these people that are treating you that way. Let Me give you a joy; it's My joy. Let Me let you experience Me." This is the characteristic of the life of Christ as it enabled Him to go to the cross. This is how He went to the cross, knowing that He was doing the best for you and me. He so loved us that He had a joy. He didn't look forward to the pain and the suffering and being separated from His Father. But He had a joy knowing that He was doing what was spiritually right for you and I and He was paying a price for us.

In Hebrews 12:2 it says this, "Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Who, for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross. Now, this joy is His joy. And when He puts a love in your heart for the people that are sinners, the people that treat you wrongly, then He's also going to give you a joy in, when you go to pay whatever price to help them spiritually. The love of Christ in us motivates to do what is necessary. He even gives us the discernment to know what that is. But in doing what is best we have His joy in doing it. Oh, how the Galatians had walked away from this beautiful truth, this beautiful truth. With the love of Christ they could have been loving each other, willing to die if necessary for each other. But instead in Galatians 5:15 he tells us they were biting and devouring one another. They had just walked away from what they could have experienced simply because they chose to do it their way.

It's a shame. It's really a shame, a shame in my life, a shame in all of our lives when we choose to do things our own way. We think we're doing the right thing many times, but we're not because the fruit is not all manifested in our life. We might be doing one of these things or two of these things and think that it's right, but no, unless all of them are there then it's not the same that we're talking about.

It is this joy that, in answer to the prayer of Jesus, caused the opposite effect. You see, the religious Jew—now I'm not talking about the Jewish people. They're a precious people. I'm talking about the hardliners—they were so tough and they brought such persecution against Paul and the other believers there. They intended for them to turn away and be defeated but it worked exactly the opposite way. In Acts 13:49, it says, "And the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region. But the Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district." Boy, they were tough. But Acts 13:51 says, "But they shook off the dust of their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium." And then in Acts 13:52, "And the disciples were continually," in the midst of all this, "were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit."

But the fruit of His Spirit is love. And with that love, which is a divine resolve to do what's best for your brother no matter what it costs you, and then with it comes a joy that you've not known before. It's the joy, it's that inner understanding that God is in control. And then he adds the word "peace." This is the effectiveness, the inward effectiveness of the fruit of God's character in our life. The word for peace is the word *eirene*. It's an inward tranquility. It has to do with knowing you are in God's favor. This is a beautiful thing. It has to do with the fact that you know, because you know, because you know, that you're doing God's will. It's a deep inward sense of wellbeing. It is His peace we're talking about, not, not just peace, but His peace.

John 14:27 says, "Peace, I leave with you, My peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled nor let it be fearful. My peace I give to you." Wow! The inner sense of wellbeing He had. Peace is the opposite of the word that means war; it's the opposite of the word that means anxiety. There's no anxiety with this peace. It's the opposite of the word that means to fight or to strive with one another. He said, "I give you My peace. There's no striving between Me and you, Wayne. I'm going to give you a sense of wellbeing. I'm going to give you that sense of wellbeing to know that you're in the midst of My will. I have given you a discernment. I have enabled you to meet the needs of your brother. I've given you a joy that is beyond anything you've ever experienced and within it is a deep, deep seeded sense of wellbeing. You're being about what I've told you to do."

And don't confuse this with the peace with God. Peace with God cannot be disturbed. You have it the moment you get saved and nobody can ever take it away from you. That's Romans 5:1, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Don't misunderstand. We're not talking about that peace. That peace cannot be disturbed. It's a relationship that's been bonded. There's no conflict between you and God. But what Paul's talking about is the peace of God. There's a difference with the peace with God and the peace of God. The peace of God can be disturbed. If we're not walking by the Spirit we don't have it. Walk by the Spirit, it's when we experience that peace of God. This peace Paul describes in Philippians 4:7. He says, "And the peace of God"—if you'll think on these things, he goes on to say—"the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." The peace of God will guard your hearts and minds with

Christ Jesus.

As a matter of fact, Colossians says it's like a referee. And I like that terminology because I played sports. When that peace is not there, the whistle's blown, a technical foul is called. Something's missing in my life; I'm not experiencing Jesus right here. Whatever I'm experiencing it's not Him, it's my flesh. God's peace is a characteristic of His love, it's the deep inner sense of His wellbeing.

Now let's see how all this fits. God's love motivates us with a discernment, first of all, to know what the need is. Then He motivates us with a deep resolve to go and meet that need. And in going and meeting that need, whatever it costs us, that we're filled with an inner rejoicing. Oh, it's just so exciting to be about the things that God is about. But also married with that is a deep sense of wellbeing; we're doing what God wants us to do with the inner joy and the peace that goes with it. You see, many times we'll go to somebody and think we know their need, but if the joy is not there and the peace is not there—now remember, there are six other things that also have to be there to make certain we understand this, kindness, gentleness, patience. All those other things have to be there because we're talking about the character of Christ. And again, you can't separate any of His attributes at any time. Oh, how God's love is so inwardly effective.

I wonder this morning if you're being effected by God's love, deep within. You see, the flesh criticizes whereas the Spirit seeks to reconcile, the Spirit seeks to restore. You say, "Wayne, give me a good example of that." Well, if you'll just hang on we're going to get to chapter 6 soon, and he's going to give you all the examples you're going to ever want. When you see your brother in a sin, go to him. Bear ye one another's burdens. He begins to help you understand how this fleshes itself out.

Now, let's just apply this. What is your inward motivation toward your brother and sister in Christ? What is it? Right now, if you could draw a circle around yourself, what would you say towards—now listen, I'm not talking about the ones you like. We have a tendency to do that. "Oh, I like _____," oh, that's great. No. Think of the ones that are unnerving you. Think of the ones that you don't like—what is your inward motivation towards them as you think about them this morning? And then, secondly, do you sense the deep desire to do for them what you believe you have discerned is their greatest spiritual need? And then, is there joy associated with this desire? Is it an inner joy that God gives to you? And is there a deep inner peace and a sense of wellbeing to know that this is God's will and you're being about what God wants in your life? That's the bottom line of what Paul's talking.

Isn't it great? Isn't it awesome to walk by the Spirit and begin to experience Him? And when we experience Him, look what happens. We get to experience each other. All of a sudden it's no longer you and me. It's us. Isn't that awesome? And we begin to see each other's needs and we help each other. And, by the way, nobody has arrived. And this is one of the beautiful things that this love does. It so melts you down that when you even approach a brother, you don't approach him as somebody who's gotten beyond him. Oh no! You're just wanting to take God's hand and his hand and put them together, and you have the deep inner sense of wellbeing, and that deep rejoicing in your heart.

You see God will create within us a love, even for the people that we don't even like. And we'll do whatever it costs us in His power to meet their spiritual need with a joy unspeakable and a peace that passes all understanding.

Galatians 5:22-23 The Fruit of the Spirit – Part 2

Now, do you know this morning that you can fake all the gifts? Do you know that? Any of them, you can fake it, but you cannot fake the fruit that the Holy Spirit produces in a person's life. You cannot fake the fruit.

Turn with me to Galatians 5:22. And we almost will get into Galatians 5:23, not quite, but that's where we are. I am so excited to be in this. We had to go through the 5:19-21 to get here. I'm glad we're here. Now, do you know this morning that you can fake all the gifts? Do you know that? Any of them, you can fake it, but you cannot fake the fruit that the Holy Spirit produces in a person's life. You cannot fake the fruit. A lot of people say, "Well, this person's filled with the Spirit because he does this or he does that." Well, listen, this is the key to being filled with the Spirit of God. If this character is not in your life, you are not walking under the control of the Spirit of God. This is so important for us to understand. This is what it is to experience Christ in our life. Galatians 5:22-23, let me just read it for you, "But the fruit of Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

You know, the Christian life is so awesome when we just simply choose to walk by the Spirit of God. When we choose to be willingly led by the Spirit of God it's incredible what God does. That's 5:16, 18. Paul says "Walk by the Spirit," be led by the Spirit of God. Those who are led by the Spirit are not under law. It's only then that we experience Christ, now hang on to this now; we've been saying for 18 months, Christ living His life in and through us. That's what we call living grace. Saving grace is that Christ is the only means of salvation. We understand that. Living grace, though, is Christ living His life in and through us once we're saved, as we learn to walk by the Spirit of God.

Galatians 2:20 says, "I have been crucified with Christ and it's no longer I who live," you know this verse by heart by now, "but Christ lives," where does He live? "in me." He lives in me. Now if He lives in me, I get to experience Him. It's not me trying to be like Him, it's Jesus being Jesus in me and in you, "and the life which I now live in the flesh," Paul says "I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me." Christ reproduces His life in us. His actual character is produced in us through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ. Both Romans and Galatians identify the Spirit as being the Spirit of Christ. All of His character, all of the character of Christ that is produced in our life is wrapped up in one word. That's incredible, and that's the word "love." That's who He is. He's not like love, He is love. Now remember, it's not just love that we experience here when we walk by the Spirit. It is His love that we experience. Christ's love is the essence of the fruit that is produced by the Holy Spirit. We saw that last week.

Galatians 5:22 again, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love." Now, the word "fruit" is singular. That tells us something. It points to the nine characteristics that are mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23, then tells us they're in a cluster. It's different from the deeds of the flesh. Deeds of the flesh, that's a plural word. You may, when you choose to walk after the flesh, you may fall to some of those traps, but not all of them at the same time. However, when you walk in the Spirit, when you walk by the Spirit all of these nine things have to be in your life at one time. But really don't worry about that; it's just simply Jesus being Jesus in your life.

The word for "love" is the word *agape*. *Agape* is the deep inner resolve. It's a choice. It's not a feeling. It's a choice of deep inner resolve to do what is spiritually necessary for our brother in Christ and really for anyone else. It doesn't matter, and it doesn't matter the cost. It doesn't matter what it cost us. That's what this love is all about. The definite article is not used there, which means it's going to characterize; we're going to see what this love is like and that's what those other eight characteristics are all about when this love is being produced within us. We saw the inward effectiveness of this love. It's incredible. It's what changed the apostle John and made him into the apostle of love. It's what changes all of us. It's a love of Christ in us. And as we begin to comprehend it, as Ephesians says, to the length and the depth and the breath and the height, we begin to comprehend it as we walk strengthened in the inner man, it changes us on the inside. It's incredible. God gives us the discernment to know the needs of our brother.

And then He gives us two things that we looked at last time, and that's joy and peace. Once we have that resolve, once we see what the need is and God gives us the resolve to move to meet that true need, not a felt need, then something happens to us. It's like a joy that floods our soul, because it's the joy of knowing that God's in control of all of this. This is not my idea. We didn't come up with this in a committee meeting. This is something God put on my heart. This is something God gave me the discernment to understand and now He's in charge and leading me. But not only is there that deep inner rejoicing, there is that awesome, awesome peace of God that floods your soul, a sense of well-being to know that you're being a part of God's business and that you join Him in what He's doing on this earth through the lives of people that are surrendered to Him.

Now, make sure you're putting all this together. I'm going to say this over and over again, because we're doing three at a time it seems like, and you can get disjointed. No, you've got to keep it together. You've got to keep it together. The love is the key. Love is the key, everything else is just characterizing that word "love." So when Wayne is walking in the Spirit, when you are walking in the Spirit, we begin to discern needs of people like we haven't seen before. Felt needs and real needs are two different things and no man in a group can come up with a real need. Only God can give that discernment. And once you have it, you have that inner resolve to meet that need no matter what it costs you, because it's a spiritual benefit to your brother. And with that comes the joy and the peace and that inward effectiveness of that love is incredible. And that's what we looked the last time.

This is Christ living His life in and through us. It's nothing mystical. It's just Christ being who He is. He's still on earth. "Oh, but brother Wayne, He's at the right hand of the Father." I know that, but in His Spirit He still lives on earth in the lives of people who are truly walking by the Spirit. People can still see Him. They see Him every day. They see Him in you and in me.

Well, we've looked at the inward effectiveness. Now we're going to look at the outward example of God's love. That's what we want to see next, the outward example of God's word. Now, the words that we're going to come to now, each one of them, again tied to that word "love," teach us a lot about how this is going to be perceived by other people. Galatians 5:22, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace," and then he adds an interesting word, "patience." The word "patience," quickly tells us that there are going to be some brothers there in the body of Christ that are going to be the odd brothers. The only problem with that statement is, every time I think somebody else is an odd brother, they're looking at me saying the same thing. It's in the eye of the beholder. But there are going to be some interesting people in the body of Christ.

You see, you would not need, or I would not need this love if there were not some unloving people out there. If there were not any unloving people we could just love everybody because everybody'd love us back. That's the whole bottom line of what Paul's trying to say here in Galatians. There are some people like that in the body of Christ and we're all going to have to deal with them down the road and that's why Paul is telling us what he's telling us. The beautiful thing is that God—listen to this—God gives us a resolve in our hearts—now listen to me—not only to know their need, but to meet the need of those kinds of people that are in the body of Christ. You tell me that somebody is filled with the Spirit because he's speaking another tongue, stand on his head, stack BB's. Listen, that doesn't impress me a bit, not one bit. What impresses me is when I see a person that's being chewed up, and I mean

spit out by somebody turn right around and love that person and meet the need of that person, that's what God is all about.

The resolve to meet their spiritual need will also involve the very patience of Christ Himself. Now understand, it's not just patience, it's His patience. We're experiencing Him, folks. We're experiencing Him. It's not just patience, it's His patience. The word for patience is the word *makrothumia*. *Makro* means long, and the word *thumia* means passionate suffering, long passionate endurance, or suffering with somebody. It's the characteristic of God. It's how He looks at you and I. It is longsuffering. It's the supernatural ability to tolerate a person whose behavior and demeanor is irritating to say the least. We think we've had it bad in putting up with unlovable people, but just think of what God has to put up with. Have you ever thought about that? If it's His patience, look who He has to put up with. If you don't understand what I'm saying, look in the mirror real carefully when you go home today. You know just the very fact that He puts up with us shows the patience that God has.

Paul was so honest. I love the apostle Paul. And in 1 Timothy 1:16 he made a statement. He said, "Yet for this reason I found mercy," this is Paul talking, "so that in me as the foremost, the chief, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience," watch this, "as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life." What Paul just simply said there was that he was the kind of sinner that Jesus came to save, and implied with the word "patience" means, Paul says, "I was obnoxious, hard-headed, opinionated, but God had patience with me and brought me to my salvation." He said, "I was an example of how God has patience for all of us."

God's patience is remarkable. It's remarkable, His willingness to put up with folks. And I have to say it again, like me. Why does He put up with me? I don't know. But it's because of who He is, and His love is filled with His patience. Don't separate the two. Because He loves us He's patient with us. Just to think that we can actually experience His patience towards others.

Now the apostle Paul speaks to the religious Jews in Romans 2. He's identified his audience in Ro 2:17 as being the Jewish, religious Jews there. And again, I'm not knocking Israel. I'm just saying these were the hard-liners. These were the ones who adamantly rejected Jesus as the Messiah and were very ruthless in what they did. Romans 2:4 he makes a statement to them, he says, "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness?" Look what the words he puts together here, "kindness, tolerance, and patience." Does that tell you about the behavior and demeanor of others? "Not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance." You know what Paul is saying to them? Don't you understand how God has put up with you to this point? Now if He's saying that to Israel, think what we Gentiles have to think about. We were the pagan world. And he said, he's reminding them of the longsuffering of God. We're studying the book of Judges on Wednesday nights, and we start walking that cycle of sin. They go from sin to sorrow to salvation to security, to sin, to sorrow and it's just a cycle. They just continued not to be willing to trust God, and yet He loved them and He was patient with them, endured their behavior.

When we walk by the Spirit, which Paul talks about in Ephesians a little bit differently—see, it's not the same; the Bible doesn't say seven different things. It says the same thing seven different ways—let me just read it for you. Ephesians 4, Paul says in Eph 4:1, "Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord implore you to walk in a manner worthy of your calling." That's the same thing as walking by the Spirit. That's the same thing as being filled with the Spirit. That's the same thing as walking in the light. That's the same thing as abiding in the vine. "Walk in a manner worthy of your calling." And then in Eph 4:2, he shows you what's going to come out of that. "With humility, and all humility and gentleness," and then he adds our word, "with patience," and he begins to give us another clue that we're going to need it, "showing tolerance for one another in love."

That's interesting to me. He talks about Jew and Gentile in Eph 2, and actually that's what he's trying to show here, having tolerance for one another. And then he says in Eph 4:3, "Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And I want you to notice, he didn't say "produce." You can't produce unity in a group of people. Only God can produce it. He's told us to preserve it, not to produce it. And what preserves it is when people walk by the Spirit of God and the love of Jesus is being manifested in their life and they're seeing the need of each other and they're filled with joy, His peace as they go about meeting the needs of others and then with the patience to tolerate the people that are unloving.

When I first went into ministry honest and truthfully, I believed at that point in my life—to show you how ridiculous it was—I believed that everybody in the church just loved Jesus, was in the Word every day, walked with Him. And when we came to church it was going to be like revival every time I came to church. That's what I thought when I went into it. Oh, brother! Now my son and my son-in-law are in the ministry, and they're beginning to learn what Paul is trying to tell us: that there are going to be hard-headed people in the body of Christ. I've been one of them. Have you been one of them? I have been one of them that will not walk by the Spirit of God and therefore you're going to have to deal with them. How do you deal with somebody that's unloving and irritable and just can't say nice things? Paul says you love them; and the only way you can love them is the Spirit of God has to produce it in your life and He'll give you a joy and a peace that even if you deal with the irritating people, and He'll give you even a patience to endure to stay with them.

Well, as I said earlier, this very word "patience" tells us all. We're now seeing the type of people that are in the body of Christ. You know, if everybody was just like us it'd be okay, wouldn't it. I've said it many times; if it wasn't for people I could live the Christian life.

But that's a wrong statement. If it wasn't for people, then I wouldn't need that which God has given me to live the Christian life. If I had said it right in the first place, that's the way to say it. Let's go to Colossians 3. Now, Paul does a very similar thing here. Again he's showing us that everybody's not going to be full of joy all the time and you're going to have to deal with that. Colossians 3:12, "So as those who have been chosen of God holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." Now, if you've studied Colossians and Ephesians all he just simply said was put on Christ because these are things that speak of Him.

But then watch what he does here. Col 3:13, "Bearing with one another." What does that tell you? If we had a discussion time right now, what is that going to tell you right here? "Bearing with one another." Why would we have to bear with one another if everybody's walking by the Spirit? Everybody's not walking by the Spirit, so therefore, "Bear with one another and forgiving each other." Why would you have to forgive each other if you're in the body of Christ and having revival all the time? Because people are going to do things to you in the body of Christ you're not going to like, but God's going to change your response. You won't react, you'll respond. You'll respond in the love He has if you'll walk by the Spirit of God. "Whoever has a complaint against anyone," —that never happens in the church! —"just as the Lord forgave you," look at the measure here, "Just as the Lord forgave you unconditionally," he says what? "or so also should you." As the Lord forgave you so also should you.

Peter shows us again that we're going to run into this kind of thing, but he makes another point. Peter wants to make sure that the wrong reactions you're getting from people is not because of your own wrong reactions towards them, or actions towards them. And so he says in 1 Peter 2:20, "For what credit is there if when you sin and are harshly treated you endure it with patience?" There's our word. He says that doesn't mean anything. I mean, you deserved it to start with. But then he said "But if when you do what is right and you suffer for it you patiently endure that, or do it, this finds favor with God." Now wait a minute, make sure you understand what he's not saying. Some people are going to treat you wrong because you've treated them wrong. But he says now listen, when you're doing what is right, you're walking by the Spirit and you suffer because of that and then you're patient, that's God in you. That's God in you and that's worthy. That's noteworthy.

The word "patience," the very patience of Christ Himself, is manifest in us when we're walking by the Spirit of God, when we're experiencing His love for one another in the body of Christ, when we are filled with His joy and peace as we seek to be about that which He is doing in and through us. And it's always geared toward the person who treats us in a very irritably, irritable way.

Well, the people that are intolerable are all around us. But he adds a word to that word "patience." And the word "patience" is first of all the ability to tolerate, to bear up under in a sense. There's another word for circumstances, *hupomone*, but this is the word *makrothumia*, which has to do with people. But then he adds another word that'll help us out. He says, "kindness," patience, kindness. You see, we're not talking about grin and bear it. A lot of people hear this message and say, "Well I guess I better love them and just suck it up. Boy, grin and bear it and you can deal." No, that's not what we're talking about at all. In fact, if you're dealing with the character of Jesus, not only is He patient, but there is a kindness that goes along with that.

Now, let me explain the word "kindness" because we need to understand this, all of us. The word "kindness" is the word *chrestotes*. It does not necessarily refer to what a person does. I guarantee you if you're thinking of the word "kindness" right now you're thinking about what somebody did that was a kind act towards you. That's not what he's talking about. That comes up next. What he's talking about right here is the tender heart that a person has before he ever does anything. It's talking about the heart of the individual. It's talking about the motivation of the individual, not grin and bear it. It's a true love here, and that true love is manifested in a tender heart towards people around them.

It's associated with the love of Christ in Titus 3. Let me just read it for you. Titus 3:4, "But when the kindness of God, our Savior and His love for mankind appear." The kindness of God, our Savior and His love appear. The two are tied together. That's exactly the way God looked at us in this world, irritating to Him, except He loved the sinner and He hated the sin. And with His kindness and His love and His patience and His joy and His peace He came to die for us on the cross. That's God's intention towards you and me.

This is a beautiful word, this word "kindness." God's love so tenderizes us when we experience Him in our life. It just melts us down. You can't be mad at somebody if you're in the presence of God. You can't do it! You can't even have a wrong thought towards them when you're in the presence of God. God tenderizes you and settles you down and melts your heart down. That's what he's talking about. It's when the sting has been taken out of your heart when you see somebody. You know what I'm talking about? Every one of us has been there. Somebody hurts you, says something, you find out about it, does whatever, and you have a stinging in your heart and you don't even want to see them. When you see them coming down the aisle you'll walk another way just to get around them. But when you're walking by the Spirit of God, God tenderizes you and removes the sting that's in your heart and gives you a love for that person. That's God working in you and in me. It's kindness. It's His kindness.

The word "kindness" is the word used for wine that is mellow. Luke 5:39 has an interesting statement here. It says, "And no one, after drinking old wine, wishes for new." It says, "For he says the old is good enough." You know what that word "good enough" is? That's our word, "kindness," *chrestotes*. In other words, it's mellowed out. It's smooth. It does not have a sting to it and they like that old,

whatever it is. Now you probably, some of you all maybe could help me with that. I don't fully understand it, but I'm getting the picture.

A person walks in the Spirit of God is not caustic in any way. Are you caustic in any way? Do you like to make your point known right now? Do you like to do that? Or when people are around you is it just smooth and the mellow character of Jesus because He's in control and you're so loving that, brother, you don't have anything caustic to say. Isn't it incredible? Well, people that are walking by the Spirit are always looking out for the needs of others because they're the only ones who know what those needs are. God has to show them. And these are the people that are filled with rejoicing and peace in their heart because they know they're being about what God does. But outwardly God gives them a patience, but not only that, a kindness.

I mean, I've been hearing a lot of stuff these days that says nice people finish last. Well, then I want somebody to come and explain to me the character of Jesus that's produced in our life out of this passage and then back up that statement. I don't find that in the Word of God. I find that Jesus would not quench the smoking flask. Nor would he crush a bruised reed. I find that He was such a calm individual that even when He took a whip in the temple they knew who He was because all of His attributes were working. I find Jesus being called the Lamb of God which the dove came and rested upon and if you've ever been around a dove, they're the most nervous creatures that ever flew in the heavens, and yet only a lamb is gentle enough for a dove to rest upon. It's the character of Jesus, folks. We need to get off this kick about the wheel that squeaks gets oiled and get with walking by the Spirit, because the character and demeanor of an individual who knows Jesus and walks in His love, he's been mellowed out. He's been smoothed out. The caustic qualities of his life have been erased and there's a pure love for people that he deals with.

This word of "kindness" is used in Matthew to show how precious His intentions are for you and me when we surrender to Him. He says in Matthew 11:30, "For My yoke is easy and My burden is," what? You know the word, "light." You know what the word "easy" is? It's our word, *chrestotes*. My yoke is kind. I don't have hard intentions for you. I have wonderful intentions for you and "My burden is light." You know, even His commandments are not burdensome. Do you realize that when you're walking by the Spirit? First John 5:3 says, "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments and His commandments are not burdensome." The only people they're burdensome to are those who don't want to do them.

So patience, kindness, and then Paul begins to show the outward manifestation of—this is the first time we've seen it—the actual deeds that are done. He begins to show it in action. And it's our third word. It's the word "goodness." Galatians 5:22 again, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love," His love, His joy, His peace, His patience, His kindness, His goodness. The word "goodness" there is the word *agathosune*. It's the word that means to do something for somebody that is so benevolent that person probably can never pay you back, but it really ministers to their need. That's that word. And there's no thought in this for yourself whatsoever. This is totally benevolent good. There's another word for "good" which means constitutional good. This is the word that means benevolent good, the way God is to you and to me. People that don't deserve it, probably their behavior's obnoxious, but God in us directs us to do for them what they need.

It is this goodness, by the way, that baffles the people that are in authority. Do realize that Christians are the biggest problem to Christianity? If we'd walk in the Spirit, you see, that's the garment of Ephesians 4. If we'd walk in the Spirit, walk by the Spirit, then God would produce a character within our lives that disarms the pagans in this world, particularly in government. The reason governments have been so harsh many times has been because of the characteristics of believers. They're wearing the wrong garment. It says in Romans 13—which is the issue that Paul's dealing with, of Roman government and a pagan government and how do you respond to a pagan government—and he says in Ro 13:3, "For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior."

My wife's so funny. We'll be riding down the road and there'll be a policeman and she'll just beat me up letting me know that policeman is sitting there. And I said, "The wicked flee when no one pursues." You know, "I'm not doing anything wrong." But she's always making sure that I notice that policeman wherever it is. I mean that. And isn't it funny how we all are? If we're doing good you don't have to fear that. That's what he says. "For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil." "Do you want to have no fear of authority?" Paul says, and I imagine every one of them said whoa, yeah. "Do what is good and you'll have praise from the same." Do what is good. What do you mean good? I don't mean help a little person across the street. It means do something benevolently good for them that has no thought of return back to yourself. That's divine. We can come up with other excuses for what we call good. I'm talking about what God wants to do through our lives.

Over in Romania the pagan government of the Communists in a particular city, they had a church that wanted to build, the pastor wanted to build a church. They didn't have a building and they were growing. And he went to the mayor, which was right, and the mayor said absolutely not. So they got together and they began to pray and said, "God, we don't know what to do. We can't go beyond what they've told us." And so God put on their hearts to love those people. God created a love for those Communists people. They went back to them and said, "Do you have any building projects you have going on around the town?" And they said, "Yes we do." And they said, "Can we help you?" And they said, "Well, we haven't got any money to pay you." "Oh no, we will do this for free. We just want to help you." And they began to build some of the projects that they had around the town.

And the mayor just couldn't believe it, and he went to the leader of the believers there. He says, "What is it about your people? They work so much harder. They have such a greater character. They have a smile on their face. We have people we pay and we can't get them to work this hard, and they certainly don't have the right attitude. What's the difference?" And they were able to share Christ with him. And he said, "I'll tell you one thing. Because of the way you have acted, you build your church." And by the way, I've preached in it and I tell you what, it's beautiful because of the testimony of believers who walked by the Spirit of God. You see, that's what we're talking about. That's what God produces in our life.

Let me tell you another passage. Romans 12. I want you notice a verse here that God has to remind me of from time to time. You know, it's bad when you're 6'7" and you weigh 260 and you can handle a lot of things, when God says "I'm sorry, Wayne, you can't use an ounce of it. You do it My way. I'll produce something in you that's different." Romans 12:19 says, "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God." In other words, God will handle it. Don't you worry about it. He says, "For it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord." That word "vengeance" is not vengeance; it's righteousness is Mine. You see, righteousness means you're just and only God knows how to judge. He says, "I'll repay that exactly what is owed. I'm not like you, Wayne. You would overpay."

You see, if I was one of the two witnesses in Revelation there wouldn't be a person living, because you know, when you get on the Interstate highway, they speak and flames come out. I'd just burn all the cars. I mean, He says, "Wayne, you're not the one, son. I'm the one, and I judge righteously. Righteousness is Mine. Justice is Mine." And he says in verse 20, he tells you, now what do you do? "But if your enemy's hungry feed him, and if he's thirsty give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil." Now look at this. "But overcome evil with" what? "With good." What kind of good? Benevolent good, which never has a thought for yourself, only for the need of the person no matter if he's a pagan or what. That's what God creates into our life.

The word "goodness" can be manifested through what you say to somebody. And I want to tell you, people that say sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never harm me, they lie. I'd much rather be beaten, wouldn't you? Boy, those words are much more powerful tools to bring you down. And it says in Ephesians 4:29 "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth," no rotten, stinky, smelly word. That's what the word means. "But only such a word as is," here we come, "is good," benevolently good. And what's it good for? Edification, building somebody up, not tearing them down. "According to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear." It's amazing how some people can be, and I can be. Just give me half a chance and I'll be the same way, mean-spirited, obnoxious, opinionated, have an agenda I want to fight over. And then God tenderizes your heart. Isn't it awesome! And for those people that treat you that way, it even gives you a love for them and you even see what their need is and you want to meet their need.

So we have the inward effectiveness, the outward example of God's love, and this love disarms the people that are having so much to say about us. But there's one more. The upward excellence of God's love. Now we've got three and we had these today and then have this one right here. The upward excellence of God's love. We've got the inward effectiveness: we've got love, joy and peace. We've got the outward example, which is patience, kindness, and goodness. And now we have the upward excellence of God's love. I'm telling you when you see this it has to point to God. It can't point anywhere else. The final three things he mentions, and I will not get to them, only one. Galatians 5:22, he adds, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness," and then he says "faithfulness."

Now, the word "faithfulness" is the word *pistis*. It means a firm persuasion that has totally radically affected my behavior. Now, I want to tell you something. You don't have faith, or you don't believe, if that doesn't change your behavior. If behavior doesn't change then all you've done is comprehended something. You don't know the biblical understanding of belief or faith. That's what changes your life. You're so firmly persuaded. It comes from the word *peitho*, which means to bow down and surrender to that which you now understand. *Pistis* is that which is believed, so I want to challenge the translation. The King James translation says faith. The New American Standard says faithfulness. And I can see how they stretched it to get that. Because if a person lives consistently he'll be dependable to be this way. But I don't think that's what he's talking about here at all.

The word is "faith." And the word "faith" means to be so firmly persuaded by something it motivates you and changes your behavior. What in the world could he be talking about? And I believe it's this: when you're dealing with people that are unloving, that's why you need love. And when you're dealing with people that are obnoxious, that's what you need that patience for and that kindness to, you see. But when you're dealing with them and you're loving them and you're seeking to meet their need and they keep spitting right back in your face, they keep throwing it right back in your face, this faith that He produces in us causes us never to give up on anybody. Because we believe that as long as we keep walking the way God told us to walk, eternal things are going on. Galatians has already taught us that the hope of faith is righteousness. And what that means is when I walk by faith I believe that a divine thing just happened. I don't have to see any results. I don't have to see people treat me differently. No sir, I'm believing that somehow it's had an effect on somebody's life.

Well, isn't it awesome to talk about experiencing Christ? Listen, it's taken me quite a bit of time to work through these words, but I want to hear, clarify it for you. When you're experiencing Jesus it can happen in an instant. Don't think it takes that long for it to happen. I'm just explaining what's going on in your life when you experience Him.

When you walk by the Spirit of God He produces His character and it will be love and if that love is real it'll be characterized by joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and faith beyond anything you've ever seen, to believe that the way you're treating somebody's going to have an eternal effect somewhere down the road.

Galatians 5:22-23 The Fruit of the Spirit – Part 3

God's much more concerned about relationships than He is anything else. Everything else, in fact, is just a test to see how we're going to relate to one another on the divine level He enables in our life.

Galatians 5:22, and we're going to go all the way through 26, and you won't believe it, we're going to finish Gal 5. I want to start off this morning by just sharing with you all the things listed in Gal 5:19-21 which the flesh produces, and all the things listed in Gal 5:22-23, in contrast to that, that the Spirit produces. I don't know if you've noticed it or not, they all have to do with relationships. Now, has that grabbed you yet? God's much more concerned about relationships than He is anything else. Everything else, in fact, is just a test to see how we're going to relate to one another on the divine level He enables in our life.

All through Galatians we have seen this very truth. God's love is so desperately needed in our lives in these days. It's the tie that binds. You say, "Well no, this or this will bind us together." No, it won't. Nothing will bind us except Him; and He is love and that love is what unites us together. There are some people who say, "Well, I don't need that love. I can do it on my own." Is that right? You get up on Monday morning, what's it like at your house? You know, when I get up I have to go straight to the shower. Mornings are highly overrated. I go straight to the shower, the only thing that wakes me up. I absolutely feel like, I don't know what I feel like, but it's not good when I get up. Then you have your coffee and then whatever you do, your breakfast and then maybe you kissed your family goodbye and you go to work. Oh, that wonderful, glorious thing we all do, and when you're there, somebody working out of the flesh blasts you with an attitude that just rips all that joy out of your life, and from then on its downhill. And you think you don't need this love.

Do we understand today that in Him all things consists, the Lord Jesus, it says in Colossians? And do we realize He is love? And do you understand that love is what's holding this world together right now? Do we understand that? Without Him it'd fly apart. The good thing is we've got believers who will walk by the Spirit, and when they do they become a catalyst and a facilitator for the unity of the Spirit to begin to work within the body of Christ. What a difference in our lives when we choose to walk by the Spirit, willingly led by the Spirit of God, the Word of God.

God's love is actually produced in us. That's incredible to me. God's love, the very love of God Himself, is produced in our life when we choose to walk by the Spirit. It's in this love that He gives us the discernment of our brother's need. And I want to make sure we hear this. Unless I'm walking in the Spirit I don't know my brother's need. But when I walk by the Spirit, God in me opens my eyes and I don't see the person, I see the problem, and I begin to see the need of this individual. With this discernment comes a divine resolve. That's what this love is, *agape*. It's a divine resolve to do whatever is necessary to meet that need no matter what it costs me. And in the midst of that there's such an inner beauty that happens here. The joy and the peace begin to flood my soul. The joy of knowing that I'm cooperating with Him, and the peace, that inner being, sense of well-being to know that I'm being about God's will, that I'm joining Him in what He's doing in and through me. That's that inward effectiveness of His love.

But there's something else. There's the outward example that we've already looked at in God's love to this world. What do they see? There are three words that describe this outward example that we saw the last time, the words "patience," "kindness" and "goodness." Aren't they beautiful words to be in the body of Christ? Patience tells us that people that we're going to be dealing with are not going to be very loving. And so we're going to have to constantly be faced and dealing with people that have a different mindset, and for that reason patience is there. It's longsuffering. It's the character of God. It's the way He deals with all of us. It's God's longsuffering.

But with that longsuffering—and they're all here together—is kindness. Now, kindness is the word describing the tenderness of a person's heart who experiences God's love working within him. This is what we're so desperately in need of. When you get in the midst of God's love it's no longer a matter of you loving somebody else, it's a matter of God loving me loving you. I mean, it's overwhelming when you realize how sinful we are and how the flesh is so wicked, and yet we realize God loves us and He melts us in His presence and He tenderizes our hearts towards everybody in the body of Christ. God is kind and His love is kind. There's nothing brash about it. When one is walking by the Spirit there's never an excuse for this kindness not to be there. There are many

people who say that they're filled with the Spirit of God because they've had this experience or that experience and that. I don't buy any of that. It's whether or not this love is there and whether or not there's a spirit of kindness in the individual.

This kindness towards the unlovable brother is manifested in the acts of goodness. And that's the only time you see it begin to work itself out. The word "goodness" is talking about those deeds that you do for somebody that have no self in it. I mean, there's no way that you can be rewarded for it on this earth. You'll be rewarded in heaven, but it's not for your own benefit, it's for theirs. It's a benevolent goodness. It's the way God deals with all of us. You see, God's love cannot be hidden. It cannot be in any way contained. When you're walking in the presence of God's love, it has to be released or it's not God's love. I mean, it would drive a person crazy if he couldn't release that love to the people that are around him. Everyone is blessed by it. It crosses every language barrier. It crosses every ethnic or cultural barrier. Everybody understands this when they see it or when they experience it.

Well, today we look at the last three words in a cluster of nine words in Gal 5:22-23 that describe the upward excellence of God's love. Now, the love that the Holy Spirit produces in us for others speaks only of God. It's not this love that the world calls love. It's something so divine it's of Him that He produces. For us to love people that are unlovable is a supernatural thing. And there are three characteristics of that love, one found in Gal 5:22 and the other two found in Gal 5:23 that we're going to look at. Now remember, it's a cluster. The word "fruit" in Gal 5:22 is singular, which means if you have love all of these other eight things are there to characterize that word "love." The definite article is not used before the word "love" which means it's to characterize it. It's to qualify it. And these eight words qualify what that love is. And remember also, it's His love. It's not just love. It's His love. It's Christ living His life in and through us, the upward excellence of God's word.

We briefly looked at the word "faithfulness" the last time we were together. It's in Gal 5:22. He adds that word "faithfulness." However, the King James picks up on something. And I can understand why the New American Standard has rendered it "faithfulness," but it's really not that word. There are two words that you need to understand the difference between. *Pistos* is faithful, *pistis* is faith. The word *pistis* is used in Gal 5:22. It refers to that which is yielding to the control of something. It's either the word or the Lord. That's why you cannot separate this word from obedience. It's the word that means to trust, to believe. It captivates your life. When loving someone who is abusive and unresponsive, then Christ becomes the source of faith, the source of being able to believe. We desperately need this when they're being abusive back to us and unresponsive to our love.

This faith he's talking about, I believe is what gives us the ability to trust that an eternal thing is happening whether I can see the results or not. And this is so needed when you're dealing with unlovable people. They don't always love you back. They don't always appreciate what you're doing, and so for that reason you're believing that when you're saying yes to God and this love is being manifested, that an eternal work is taking place. It is this faith that causes us to be faithful, to be dependable, to be trustworthy, to continue to follow that pattern to letting Jesus be Jesus in us, because if we didn't have it then we'd give up on an individual and God never gives up on anybody.

We've already seen that righteousness is the hope of faith. I hope you're grabbing this. In Galatians 5:5 he says, "For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness." What is the hope of righteousness? The certainty of righteousness. The ultimate fulfillment is that one day when we stand before God we'll be rewarded for saying yes to Him. But the temporary and immediate contextual fulfillment of this is that when you're saying yes to God, He's working, and you don't have to see the results. I don't have to see anything—and I'm saying this to myself—when you're doing what God tells you to do, you just believe that an eternal work is taking place whether you can see the results or not. And how helpful that truth really is. I've seen it over the years.

But, you know, over the years of being in ministry I've seen this truth worked out in ways that I didn't understand it until I studied Galatians. I've seen people with a divine resolve no matter what the results to continue to love an individual with absolutely standing fast with all the characteristics that we've studied here in Galatians 5:22-23, and it's just overwhelmed me. But I'll tell you, one of the places that I've seen it that has probably caught my attention the quickest has been in a family situation where a wife has the love of Jesus flowing in her life, filled with the Spirit of God and she has a husband that couldn't give a rip. And the sorry rascal treats her abusively, verbally and everything else, but she just stands in there and loves him. And the sweetness of Jesus is all over her and the kindness of the Lord Jesus is there and the gentleness and the patience and all that.

And I've seen it over and over again how they just continue. I've stepped back and I think, how in the world could she love a rascal like him? And then it dawned on me, that's not her. That's Jesus being Jesus in her. And I want to tell you something, when you're allowing this love to work through you, there is nobody that is not a candidate for it. And there's nobody that can treat you in such a way that can pour cold water on it, if you're continuing to look at Jesus and not at them, just keep saying yes to Him, just keep saying yes to Him and that's going to have an eternal effect on the people that you're loving.

Well, then Paul takes and adds the word "gentleness" to that, beautiful word. Listen to the characteristics of his words. The word "gentleness" is the word *prautes*. It's the word that describes the inward grace of the soul. It's the humble spirit of a person who has been broken of his own strong will. As a matter of fact, in secular terminology this is used of a wild horse that has been broken to the will of his master. You see, the English word "brokenness" is not in the New Testament in most translations. And for some reason

some people think that because it's not in there that it's not a biblical truth. Oh no, we speak English. I wish we could remember that the Bible was not written in English. It was written in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, and the language and the culture of those people have the concepts that are there. We just simply pull the word "brokenness" out because it communicates quicker in our minds.

You see, that word *prautes* it's not translated weakness, it's translated meekness in many places. Now what he's talking about is strength under control. He's not talking about a weak lily kind of person. He's talking about a person that has the power but it's been put under the control of the Lord Jesus in his life. He's been broken, his will has been broken, to the lordship of Christ. It's the inner attitude of a believer who is submissive to God no matter what God allows in his life and no matter who God puts into his life. It is not a weak characteristic. It is a powerful characteristic. It's Christ in a person.

It is used to describe the character of Christ who was totally submitted to His Father's will. In 2 Corinthians 10:1 Paul uses this. "Now I Paul, myself, urge you," look what he says, "by the meekness and the gentleness of Christ." That's it right there. That's who He is. And Paul said that's the way I come to you. It's used in Galatians 6, of the attitude we must have when we deal with a brother who is in sin. We're going to see this next time. He says in 6:1, "Brother, even if anyone is caught in any trespass you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, each one looking to yourself so that you too will not be tempted." This is the way we approach a brother who's been caught in a sin with the meekness and the gentleness of Christ.

It is how we are to be when we correct those who might be in error. In 2 Timothy 2:25 it says, "with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition and perhaps God may grant them repentance, leading to the knowledge of the truth." It's a characteristic we are to pursue to desire in our life. It says in 1 Timothy 6:11, "But flee from these things, you men of God, and pursue," and he gives you the things we are to be pursuing in this life, "righteousness" and all of it is Jesus being Jesus in us, because He's the one who produces every bit of it. "Righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance," and then he says, "and gentleness." Now the word "pursue" there is interesting, and we need to understand it. It's the word *dioko*. *Dioko* means to pursue something until it's obtained.

We had the experience of cougar hunting this year and I've mentioned it a couple of times. They gave us horses. My horse's name was Chihuahua. Does that tell you where it came from? My horse did not speak English. And I want you to know it did not obey English because it only spoke Spanish. But we went out after those cougars, those mountain lions. It was four of us on horseback. We pursued those things for seven hours. We had to learn how to walk all over again when we got back home. I've never ridden a horse that long in my entire life, I don't think. So it's just a real interesting day.

But that word "pursue" means to get on a trail and to pursue something until you have captured what it is that you're pursuing. It doesn't mean just every now and then do something. When those dogs started out, you ought to hear those dogs. Son, they had an agenda. They're going after this big time. Those dogs running out on that trail, I mean, it was just awesome. And I tell you what, when you started off on horseback behind them you're committed, because you're pursuing something and you're pursuing it to the point that you want to capture it.

That's exactly the word Paul uses here. Don't ever back off until this is a part of your life, gentleness. Because it's part of the fruit of the Spirit. It's part of the package. It's part of the cluster. Oh, my friend, it's an oxymoron when a believer treats another believer as if they're enemies, when this gentleness is not there. I'm hearing all this stuff about "this is the time to stand up and be a man." and be this and be that. You tell me from Scripture where you see that truth other than the greatest man that ever lived lives in us. And He, through us produces His own character and His character is that He's gentle, He's gentle. Gentleness is the characteristic we're to have when we relate to others no matter who they are, if we're in the restaurant, if we're in the gas station, wherever we are.

Titus 3:1, "Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed" and Titus 3:2, "to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle." Isn't that precious? "Showing every consideration," now listen to this, "for all men." Plato said of this word an interesting thing. Plato, one of the people back in those times in this pagan world, secular world. He said that this word stands between two extremes. It's not a person who cannot be angry, but it's a person who can be angry—now listen—at the right time, at the right thing with the right measure. That's what it is. It's a virtue and it's only produced by the Holy Spirit of God. It demonstrates gentleness in the midst of power. It's a balance borne in strength and character.

It is associated with kindness and compassion and humility and patience in Colossians 3:12. Now look, think how those interlock together. Colossians 3:12 says, "So those who have been chosen of God holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." And they all fit together in that cluster. It is the difference of using the rod to beat somebody into submission or treating them with kindness and letting that be your tool. Paul says to the Corinthian church that needed quite a bit of chastising, he said 1 Corinthians 4:21, "What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod?" Is that what you want? "Or would rather have me come with love and a spirit of gentleness?" This speaks so much of who God is. The way we treat one another, whether it be on the job or in the ordinary highways and byways of life, when we're allowing Christ to live in and through us, this gentleness will be part of the demeanor in which they will walk away remembering about us, dependably faithful to keep on keeping on. I think that's what that faith is all about. And then with the gentleness of Christ Himself.

The final characteristics that describe Christ's love is His self-control. Gal 5:22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness," 23: "gentleness," and then he says "self-control." The word "self-control" is the word *egkrateia*. It is inward strength that always displays itself in outward control over one's self, outward control. The opposite of the word self-control would be someone who was without restraint. Now, this is a reckless individual. Someone who is so reckless in what he says and what he does that he breaks people's spirit rather than breaking their will. There's a huge difference. It's awesome when a parent is filled with the Spirit of God so they don't break the spirit of their child. They simply are there to break the will, but they do it with gentleness and kindness and patience and all the fruit that God speaks of here.

It sums up the control Christ has in the believer's life who is walking by the Spirit. And when one is under control, then and only then can he be in control, and that self-control be seen in his life. It is pictured for us in a beautiful way of a disciplined athlete. In 1 Corinthians 9:25 he says, "Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things," and he speaks of those secular runners. Then he says, "They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we do the same thing to receive an imperishable wreath." And so it's a picture of a honed, trained athlete. This kind of self-control is what the lost cannot have. Anyone can will himself to do anything. He can get on a self-improvement program, grit his teeth and with determination come up with something. But this is a divine restraint, far beyond anything that the flesh can ever produce. It is different than simple discipline and apparent self-control.

Luke uses the word as an example of that as a confrontation's going on with some secular folks. And it says in Acts 24:25, "But as he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, 'Go away for the present; when I find time I will summon you.'" See, what's happening here is that Felix and Drusilla, neither one of them were believers. And what they were being talked to about was the things they didn't possess. They didn't possess righteousness, so therefore they didn't exhibit self-control. Until Jesus, who is the essence of righteousness, lives in us, then there can be no self-control, and judgment would overtake them all. And they got under deep conviction. He says, "You go away. I'll summon you when I want to talk to you again," because it brought deep conviction in their life.

A person without Christ cannot have this. This is Christ's lordship expressed in our lives. It is His divine control. He was the perfect Man, totally in control, and now He lives in us to be the perfect Man through us. It's not us; it's Christ living His life in us.

Paul finishes the list of the characteristics of Christ with these words. He says, "Against such things there is no law." Now, that's the most fascinating statement to me. It's a powerful statement. All of this fruit in the cluster that he just mentioned—actually it's love and all the characteristics of that love for our fellow man, the people that are unlovable to us—he says, this kind of character, there is no law against it. Now there are two meanings there. First of all, God has no law against it. He's not going to judge you of these things that are seen because that means you're living, He's living in your life. Galatians 5:14 says, "For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" And so what is the word then that fulfills the law? It's love and only the Holy Spirit can produce it and God has no law against that. Relationships are always the litmus test of whether or not we're walking by the Spirit.

But not only that, not only does God not have a law against it, people don't make laws against this. A dear lady came to me and she said, "I've been trying to reach a neighbor of mine that has just absolutely been mean to me." And she said, "I walk and I come in in the mornings, and when they take the garbage out they always leave their garbage can out most of the day." And she says, "You know, I got to thinking about that," and she said, "I could help that." And she said, "I've been listening to the message. I've been listening to what God's been saying to my heart through this love." So you know what she's been doing? She started getting their garbage can on Mondays when they leave it out too long and pushing it up next to the house. Well, she said, "I've been doing that for several days and says you know what? They called me up and asked me to come over for dinner."

I want to tell you something, folks, there's no law against this love. People don't react to it, they respond to it. They reward it. It is the character of Jesus in to our life, and it covers every language. Another dear brother was telling me he's witnessing to a family that speaks another language, and he's just sought to love them, asking God to love these people through him. And the other day he was with them in a very difficult time and the man who spoke another language from another country took his hand and licked his hand. And his daughter or his wife said to him, said, "You know what that means, don't you? He so responded to the love that you've shown to him he's made you his brother."

Folks, what's wrong with us? When we act as if we don't even know Christ, there is a law against that. In fact, it tells us we're not walking by the Spirit, and that's when people get broken down. This is when people get beat up. This is when people's spirits are crushed. We have no right to live that way. We have the privilege to live with Christ living His life through us, and there's no law against the character He produces. There's no law against it all.

I went in to get my glasses fixed one day. I'd broken them again. I took them in and the lady looked at me and I had one piece in one hand and one piece in the other hand. And I said, "Yeah, I'm a klutz. I did it. No excuse." She said, "You know what? I think we can figure out how to work that into your warranty." It'd been over a year. And I said, "Really? I mean, I hadn't even thought about that."

Sure enough she came back and she says, "I'm going to put that in your warranty." I said, "How can you do that?" She said, "I'll tell you why. Because you were nice to me, and because you didn't try to lie about it."

That's what we're talking about. The contention and division and factions in the church come from people who don't seem to understand this. And it's not the issue they think it is. Oh, it's deeper than that. The symptoms is what we're dealing with all the time, and we're wrong. We should deal with the problem. And the problem is we're not walking filled with the Spirit of God. If we were, God has no law against it. And man has no law against it. And people respond when God loves through His people. That's what he's talking about. Man, if we could just get our act straight. When we look at Him instead of looking at the situation, the obvious is never the actual, and only God can turn the light on and show you what the actual is. That's where it is.

So the inward effectiveness of this love is awesome. Joy and peace like you've never known before because you're experiencing God. You have no animosity towards anybody. But then the outward example of God's love, you're able to put up with people that are just so unloving and mean and cruel. And then the upward excellence of that love manifests itself in that faith to believe that God's doing it and the beautiful aspects of His character in your life.

Now to conclude the chapter Paul does something. He takes us right back to where he started. And I love that about Paul. He's not losing track of the context here. The context started back with Gal 5:16 and Gal 5:18, walk by the Spirit and you'll not fulfill the desires of the flesh. Why? Cause the flesh wars against the Spirit. Gal 5:18, if you're led by the Spirit willingly led by the Spirit, then you're not under law. You can't be judged by what you're doing. Law has no condemnation over you. Now he comes finally to the last point. The onward experience of God's love. He brings us to the point of understanding we can experience this at any time, no matter what our circumstances are.

Paul wants them to realize that they can experience God's love in them daily. The way they received that love was by faith. They received Christ who is love, so they received it by faith. The way you walk in it is by faith. That's what he's going to remind them of. It's very powerful. The act of faith—and I want you to hang on to this—the act of faith, saying yes to God, being controlled by His Spirit and His Word, crucifies the power of the flesh. Now it crucified it in Galatians 2:20 back when we got saved. But it also continues to keep it lying dormant when we continue to say yes to Him.

He says in Gal 5:24, "Now those who belong to Christ Jesus." Now, the first thing he does is to remind them. He takes them back to their salvation experience, "those who belong to Christ Jesus." He identifies the believer. There's only one way you can belong to Christ Jesus and that's through faith. That's the only one way you can be a part of His family. It says that in Galatians 3:26, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." That's the only way you can belong to Christ Jesus. So he's already talking to believers here. And then he adds, "Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh."

Now, "have crucified" is the same word used in 2:20 when Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ," except he puts it in a different voice there. When Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ," he was speaking of his salvation experience. The same thing here, but to crucify is to put to death. It's the aorist active indicative verb; not aorist passive. If it was passive, I had been put to death. But this doesn't say that. It says, "I was crucified." I had something to do with it, active voice. Aorist means it's a done deal. It happened at salvation. It's already taken place. But the active voice means that the believer has actually participated in the action by some kind of choice. He had some will in it. He had a choice in it.

Now in the Jewish mindset he has chosen, he has made a choice, to turn from the law to turn and to Christ. But in the Gentile mindset, he's turned away from his idols to turn to Christ. It says in 1 Thessalonians 1:9, "For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God." The fact is, every believer has made a choice. Now you say, Wayne, that's a work. No, no, no, no. If He lives with faith, it instigates a choice; we're just cooperating with Him, but there is a choice involved here. When we choose to turn to Christ we choose immediately, now listen, to turn away from the flesh.

Now listen carefully, that choice to say yes to Him at salvation, to say "Oh yes, Lord Jesus, will You come live in my life," that choice of faith crucified the flesh. That's what he's saying. The flesh has no control, it had no control at that moment in that situation. It was put to death through the choice of faith. What does that tell you? It's so easy. If we'll continue to exercise faith, flesh has to remain dormant. It has no power. It's disengaged. That's what he's trying to say. And Paul adds in Gal 5:24, "Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh." He wants to make sure we understand the intensity of the flesh "with its passions and with its desires."

The word "passions," *pathema*, means strong passionate emotions. The word "desires," *epithumia*, means intense desires. He took two phrases there and summed up Gal 5:19-21 which is the deeds of the flesh. And what he's telling me today, and what he's telling you today, is that when you got saved your flesh had been disengaged, the act of faith put it in its place. It rendered it powerless and if you'll continue to walk that way, say yes to God and to His Word, walk by the Spirit, be led by the Spirit, it lies dormant, it cannot bother you at all. It cannot come back to haunt you. Your relationships are going to be divine, on a divine level, because God in you

will unite you together. But when you choose not to live that way you have just resurrected that power, and that's what happened to the Galatian people as he summarizes the whole of chapter 5. All of the passionate intense desires of the flesh lie dormant when we say yes to Christ. So Paul reminds them of what's already taken place. It's kind of like, well listen, if He's already defeated it why do you let it defeat you now? Why, you've already learned how to defeat it by saying yes to Christ. Now why do you bring it back?

The second thing Paul does, then he makes a request. It's a very simply request, Gal 5:25. "If we live by the Spirit," he says, "let us also walk by the Spirit." Now he states the possibility that is ours because of the choice that is made. It's like he is saying, "Because you have already made the choice, enabled by faith, then what's the problem?" I mean, we know the answer. The answer is to get on your face before God and let God in you be what He wants to be and stop trying to help Him out. Let Him be who He wants to be in your life. It's like He is saying because you've already made it, then you're messing up because you're not living out of that which saved you. Colossians 2:6 says, "As you therefore have received Him, so walk you in Him." That's what he's saying. Why aren't you walking in Him? You can, you've already done it. You can; enabled by the Spirit of God you can say yes to Him.

When he says "If we live by the Spirit," that's a first class condition "if." It means since we do. That's the only way we can live. The only way we experience the essence and fullness of life is by the Spirit as we say yes to Him. Since Christ has made it possible to live this way then he says "let's also walk by the Spirit." That's Gal 5:16, "walk by the Spirit and you'll not fulfill the desires of the flesh." He just comes right back to where he started and he's trying to show us it's so simple, it's so simple.

The word "walk" here is the word *stoicheo*. It's in the present active subjunctive. Present means it's a lifestyle. Subjunctive means, well, you may and you may not. He's talking to a group of people that have already chosen not to once. And he says there's really no guarantee you're going to choose to do it again. But he said, "I don't understand the problem here. When you received Jesus your flesh had been disengaged. And remember the sense of blessing you once had?" Remember that verse we studied. He said, "Where's that sense of blessing you once had? You were running well; who has hindered you from running the way you were running?"

Now, don't let me lose you here, but Paul is simply making a request. We've already been enabled to say yes, why don't we go on and continue to say yes? You say, Wayne, that's a work. Are you kidding me? Philippians says He lives within me to will—give me the desire—and to work. So when I say yes to Him it's not a work; it's cooperating with a desire He's already put within me, and that's what Paul is trying to say. This is the simplest thing in the world. He's made it so easy for you if you'll just walk by faith. But evidently you found something you think is a better way, he tells the Galatians.

So the third thing he does, then, is relate to them what will immediately change if they will walk this way. He says in Gal 5:26, "Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another." Let us not become boastful," he says. "Let us not become," is present middle passive. Let me explain that to you. The present tense means "don't continue to become," they're already in the process. Middle passive is a deponent verb, which means part of it depends on the other part of it. Middle voice means this is your own choosing. But passive voice means it's because of something that has happened to you. Why are you making these choices? It's because of something that's gone on around here. And what was it? We know the context. The context is the Galatian heresy. The people came in and sold them a bill of goods, religious goods, and because of that, now they're making choices not to obey the Spirit but to obey their flesh, and he says this is why you're becoming boastful.

That's interesting; he throws that word in there. Do you realize that religious people have to boast? They have to boast of what they've done. They have to boast of everything. Why? Because they have to measure it, and if you can't measure it, you're not there; the law demands a standard and you've got to rise to that standard. He says, oh yeah, you've become boastful. But he says it's "empty boasting." And that word "empty," *kenos*, there is the word meaning exactly that—there's nothing in it; and then *doxos* is glory. You get empty glory out of this. The word is *kenodoxos*. You think, why in the world would he even say that? Oh, if you know the context, the context rules here. He's dealing with a group of people that have bought a religious bill of goods. And as a result of it they've become boastful about what they have done, and it's empty boasting.

I wish people could understand in 1 Corinthians 3 it says our work, "our works are going to be judged by fire." And it says in 1Cor 3:13, "Each man's work will become evident, it will be recognized." Oh, yeah, there's going to be some recognition, "for the day will show it because it's to be revealed with fire and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work." All this religious stuff that the Galatians were doing was empty, because one day it's going to burn at the judgment seat of Christ. And he says, why in the world are you becoming boastful? And the reason goes back to the false doctrine you've bought into, he says. And then he says, "challenging one another," *prokaleomai*. Two words, *pro*, before, *kaleo*, to call. And this is what the word means, it means to call each other into combat.

You know, when I read this, that's an oxymoron to the body of Christ, isn't it; when people fight in the body of Christ, call each other to combat. That's what he says you're doing. He says you stop doing that. You stop it. And you're doing it because of the false doctrine you bought into. You're running your life. Jesus is not Lord of your life. And then he says "one another," and that's *allolon*. That's the word that means of the same kind. He says these believers are doing this together. You see, the law mentality, flesh-

minded person always has to win, and they'll do whatever it is to win. They'll tear down somebody else to make themselves look good. They'll do whatever they do, whatever they do they have to do. They're driven, they're driven because they have to win. But a believer has already been defeated by the Lord Jesus and he walks in the victory He's given to him. He doesn't have to win. God wins.

"Envy of one another" is the last words he says. I think Paul sums it up as beautifully in his epistle to Timothy as any place else. When a person buys into a religious flesh-minded work, he's automatically bought the whole package, as we've been studying. And he sums it up in 1 Timothy 6:3, "If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words," Paul says, "those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness," which, by the way, "is a mystery which is Christ in us," it says in Colossians, "then he is conceited and understands nothing, but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise," and he gives a list, and envy's the first one, "envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth who suppose that godliness is a means of gain."

And I guess what he's saying as we finish up chapter 5 is that religious people are always, always contentious. There is a driving spirit of them, they have to win. They have to get their case across. They have something to prove. And as a result of it, we saw earlier, that they bite and devour one another. People who live under law have to be recognized. They have to embarrass. They have to boast in what they have done because that's flesh. But we can say yes to Christ and avoid all that contention. Didn't he make it simple? I've got a choice. I mean, God respects me a whole lot more than I respect Him. He gave me a choice. I can say yes to Him, which is what faith is. And, by the way, He already has the desire within me to do that. All I've got to do is cooperate with it. And then the work is His life lived out through me and through you.

The same faith that saved us is the same faith that sustains us. It's Christ who saved us. It's Christ who sanctifies us. If we go the religious route we've bought the message of the flesh. And let me ask you a question. What's the middle letter of the word sin? What's the middle letter? What's the middle letter of the word pride? Now, you take those two things out—which by the way, the cross does—then you don't even have a word. When you say yes to Him, you've just crucified the "I," the flesh.

By the way, this whole life that we have, we didn't come up with. No committee gets the credit for it. This is God's plan in eternity that He come live in us and not renew our flesh, but to replace it. And when He replaces it, everybody knows the difference because the character that He produces, there's no law against. And people don't react to being loved. People don't react to be shown kindness and goodness and the things that are there. No, they don't react to that. They respond and that's what it's all about.

How are you doing today? How are you doing today? Are you walking in the Spirit? If you are, and I hope we are, then the unity of this place is going to come together in such a way it's going to be supernatural. But if we're not, it'll be contention after contention after contention. But then he said it would be that way, didn't he? That's where it goes right back to having to walk in the Spirit of God cause the people you're dealing with are not ready yet to say yes to Christ.

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