



# GALATIANS

VERSE-BY-VERSE

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MINISTRIES

SESSION 16 | GALATIANS 5:22-26

## GALATIANS 5:13-26 | THE SPIRIT OR THE FLESH

- Verses 13-21 included on session 15.
- Verse 22-23 –
  - Much has been made on the **fruit of the Spirit**, found in these two verses. However, there probably isn't as much theological value in "dissecting the fruit" as in recognizing the outcome of a Spirit-directed life. If you want to gauge your spirituality, this is a great place to begin. Being in the singular as **fruit**, one must consider this as an entire package. You can be very gentle and yet not very temperate - in which case you do not have the **fruit**, but one slice of the fruit.
  - The whole of the fruit is:
    - **Love** - *agape*, an intrinsic love.
    - **Joy** - for rabbinical Judaism, joy was always eschatological, was a required obligation at the Sabbath meal, and was an outward expression. "Joy is critical in carrying out our obligation to be a moral and faithful Jew."  
([https://www.chabad.org/multimedia/video\\_cdo/aid/3031277/jewish/Strategies-to-Always-Be-Happy.htm](https://www.chabad.org/multimedia/video_cdo/aid/3031277/jewish/Strategies-to-Always-Be-Happy.htm) - accessed Jan. 30, 2020)
    - **Peace** - εἰρήνη [eirene], from which we get *irenic* and *serene*. A freedom from anxiety.
    - **Longsuffering** - having a long fuse!
    - **Gentleness** - from a word which implies using a tool for its correct purpose. Thus the word doesn't mean "not with strength," but "strength applied correctly."
    - **Goodness** - one who does good things.
    - **Faith** - The Spirit does not give us faith, rather, faith is a fruit of walking in the Spirit. Most easily understood as *fidelity*.
    - **Meekness** - the English word comes through the Dutch language, from a word meaning *soft* or *pliable*. A meek person is *teachable* rather than stiff-necked and closed-minded.
    - **Temperance** - the Greek ἐγκράτεια [enkrateia] is from the root *kratos*, a *power* word. The most literal definition would be "in control."
  - The fact that **against such there is no law** does not mean that no one will ever get in trouble with this set of characteristics. One may, in fact, be "kicked to the curb" when bearing this fruit. However, the one who walks in the Spirit will look like this description.
  - Using these verses as a basis for our spiritual condition -
    - Should we grade ourselves on these? In one sense, yes! But only if we do so accurately and with the whole.
    - Should we attempt to create these in our lives? Not necessarily! If they are absent, we should note that we have some aspect of the flesh we are not allowing the Spirit to control.
    - Should we judge our salvation on these? Never! No such criteria is given in this text (nor any other).

- Verse 24 –
  - Here Paul’s words are plain, yet because of a failure of pronoun interpretation, misapplication has taken root. For example:
 

*Adam Clarke - “All genuine Christians have crucified the flesh - are so far from obeying its dictates and acting under its influence, that they have crucified their sensual appetites; they have nailed them to the cross of Christ, where they have expired with him.”*
  - Clarke (and others) say that if you still have **the affections and lusts** of the flesh, you are not a “genuine Christian.” These preachers always fail to explain the degree to which fleshly affections and lusts can be present in a person’s life, and whether or not they must be totally eradicated before salvation can be assured.
  - The words of this verse *alone* do lead to the conclusion of Clarke (and company). However, a verse cannot be interpreted alone, without its context.
    - In the context of Galatians 5:24, one must recognize that the third person plural (represented by the English word **they**, though Paul only uses a third person plural verb, **crucified**) is used throughout Galatians 5 to refer to the Judaizers (see, for example, Gal. 5:12, compared with the second person plural of Gal. 5:13).
    - Therefore, Paul is talking to the Judaizers, telling them that for the Christian, circumcision is not necessary, and that these Judaizers need to *crucify the flesh* along with its **affections and lusts**.
    - Interestingly, the word **affections** is πάθημα [pathema] and is *only here* translated **affections** and is a pain/suffering word in all other usages (the word is used 16 times, always as *sufferings* or *afflictions*).
    - In short, the Judaizers had a doctrine that desired the sufferings of the flesh in order to prove their devotion to Christ. Strangely, those like Adam Clarke teach a similar doctrine, though without circumcision.
  - Does this mean that the Christian can live without regard to activity of the flesh? Absolutely not! But many other Scriptures could speak to that.
- Verse 25 –
  - Since at least Galatians 2:15, the first-person plural (*we/us*) has been the Jewish people. Paul argues that the Jewish people, since they **live in the Spirit** should also **walk in the Spirit** rather than in the flesh, as the Judaizers were encouraging.
  - This verse is *incidentally* applicable to the church also, since the church is a spiritual organism.
- Verse 26 –
  - Continuing to speak to the Jews, he speaks of **vain glory**, presumably the ability to boast in circumcision.
  - The very act of circumcision (or any legalism) leads to **provoking one another** as well as **envying one another**.