

# The Flesh and The Spirit

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and turn to Galatians chapter 5.! We're going to begin reading at verse 13 and read through verse 26.! And as we did last week, where it says sinful nature, Pastor John has asked me to read the word flesh.

Galatians chapter 5, verse 13. You, my brothers, were called to be free, but do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh.

Rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command. Love your neighbor as yourself. If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh.

They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. The acts of the flesh are obvious, sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery, idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like.

[1:33] I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Against such things, there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Let us not become conceited, provoking, and envying each other. If we didn't have God the Holy Spirit living within us, we would not stand a chance against the temptations to sin.

Because we not only have an enemy outside of us seeking to get us to sin, but we learned last week from Romans especially that we have an enemy on the inside, the flesh.

And it desires just what the devil is presenting to us outside. It's a traitor within, willing to hand us over a spiritual law of gravity at work in our members that's pulling us down constantly.

[3:04] And so we're simply no match for our enemies. Without the Holy Spirit, the flesh would overpower us, it would control us, it would reign over us.

And indeed it did so all the days before God saved us. Sin reigned, death reigned, the flesh reigned, the devil reigned over us.

Ephesians 2, 3, all of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of the flesh and following its desires and thoughts.

That was the way we were. But when God saved us, he gave us his blessed Holy Spirit and gave him to us to live inside of us.

And he is the answer to our need in this Christian warfare that we find ourselves in. He's no extra. He's no optional accessory that we can do without.

[4:06] No, it takes the Holy Spirit to live a holy life. It takes the Spirit of Christ to live the Christian life.

And so he's an absolute essential for our survival and for our thriving in the spiritual battle. He's the one who empowers us to resist temptation, to say no to the flesh.

He's the one who creates holy desires within us. He's the one who creates ways of escape so that we can stand up under temptation. He's the one who works in us both the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

He's the one who moves us to be careful to keep God's law. He is the answer to our need. Indeed, he supplies the strength, the power in battling against our inward flesh.

And we need that because though the flesh no longer reigns in us, it does still remain in us, Christians. And we never are more conscious of its remaining presence than when we set ourselves to do something good.

[5:21] Paul says, I find this law at work that when I want to do good, evil is right there with me. Resisting me, pulling me down, and pulling me away from the good that I want to do so that I don't do the good that I want to do.

I wonder how many times you've left this very building having been challenged by God himself to change some area in your life and you left with resolve.

But you didn't get far into your week before you realized that there's someone opposing you. That the flesh was dragging its heels in that very area in your life, resisting what you so much had resolved to do.

Well, that's the battle. And in our battle against the flesh, we cannot survive or thrive without the Holy Spirit. And so we're going to see that today, especially as it's found in Galatians chapter 5. And the first lesson we want to note is that inner conflict is part of the normal Christian life. It's that battle, that struggle within is part of normal Christianity.

[6:39] Christianity has been plagued by those who teach a struggle-free Christian life. And various forms of it keep coming around, but they all hold out the possibility of living a higher life free from the struggle within.

Where you just let go and let God. And you sit back and He lives through you effortlessly. Or you just learn the secret of how to live the Spirit-filled life.

And once you learn that secret of the Spirit-filled life, why, you'll be lifted above the conflict. And they tell us, therefore, that we need to get out of the struggle of Romans 7 and into the victory of Romans 8.

Get out of the struggle with the flesh in Romans 7 and into the victory of the Spirit in Romans 8. As if the Holy Spirit's presence and ministry in us is a way to avoid the struggle.

Now, Paul's teaching is just the opposite. Couldn't be more contrary to that teaching. In fact, he's telling us here that the very reason that you find inner conflict in the Christian life is precisely because of the presence and ministry of God the Holy Spirit within you.

[8:03] It is because you have within you these two influences, your flesh and the Holy Spirit of God with two different desires, two different minds, two different agendas for you that you find ongoing conflict in the Christian life.

Notice how he puts it in Galatians 5:17. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh.

These are in conflict with each other so that you do not do what you want. And again, we've said how many times we want to do some good and it's because of this struggle within that we come short of what we wanted to do.

So the flesh wants one thing and the Spirit wants the opposite. When the Spirit says yes, the flesh always says no. And when the Spirit says no, the flesh always says yes.

So the Spirit says pray. The flesh says don't pray. The flesh says get even. The Spirit says don't take revenge.

[9:16] The flesh says love yourself. The Spirit says love your neighbor. And that's why you feel this inward tug of war.

Kids, you've played tug of war where you're holding the rope and you're friends and you're pulling with all your worth to try to get the other people who are pulling their direction to get them over to your side and they're trying to pull you over to their side.

But this is an inside tug of war where we have both sides in our hearts. And you're being pulled one way but at the same time you're being pulled another way.

The Spirit's pulling you toward God and the flesh is pulling you toward sin. The Spirit's pulling you up. The flesh is pulling you down. Think if you had two kids living in your home with such contrary desires as are found within you Christian.

So, we're going to eat it when you're on vacation. We're going to go to McDonald's and one kid's yay and the other kid's mad. Or one kid's glad about one thing and the other one's always contrary.

[10:29] It creates discord and trouble. Well, you carry those two influences within you at all times. Right now, in church, you've got both of them there.

One's pulling you upward toward God and the other one's pulling you away from God. Sometimes you'd like to say, well, why don't you two just get along in there?

That's what you say to your kids when they act up. Well, they can't get along. They have irreconcilable differences. Their differences are as deep-seated as their very nature of who or what they are.

You know, the Holy Spirit will always and only have holy desires. And your flesh will always and only have sinful desires.

others. That's why there's conflict in the Christian. The two will never agree. They will remain in conflict all your life.

[11 : 35] So the sooner we get rid of this idea of a struggle-free Christian life, the better off we'll be. The sooner we'll stop chasing rabbit trails and things that were never promised to us in the Bible, this struggle-free life.

And the sooner we'll get down to the business at hand of learning how to live with this constant tension between flesh and spirit in the Christian life.

Now, believers, we are looking forward to a struggle-free existence. It's called the eternal state. It's called heaven. And indeed, when we see Christ at his return, the Bible says that the flesh within us will be exterminated forever, we will become like him, and we will obey God perfectly, and we will have no other desire in our hearts except that of pleasing and enjoying him.

Oh, that will be glory for me, and glory for you, brother and sister. But until then, we must come to the reality that the inner struggle is part and parcel of the normal, spirit-filled life.

It's a sign of spiritual life. It's a proof of the Holy Spirit's presence within, offering resistance to the flesh. And we need to learn that there are some blessings that Christ has purchased for us at Calvary that we have to wait for.

[13 : 12] There are many of, many things that Christ has purchased for us that we have to wait until heaven to receive the full inheritance. This is one of them.

So that's the first lesson, conflict, inward conflict. It's part of the normal Christian life. The second lesson is the key to not gratifying the desires of the flesh is to live by the Spirit.

Verse 16, so I say, live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. So the flesh is ever pulling you down.

Right now, it's pulling you down. And without the Holy Spirit, you would gratify its desire. You would capitulate to its demands. But as you live by the Spirit, by His leading, by His empowering, you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Because He takes you and leads you in a way, contrary to the flesh. When's the last time you were in a situation where you were called upon to make a decision?

[14 : 24] And you knew that to make a decision would mean somebody's going to be happy with your decision and somebody's going to be very upset with your decision. We all get into those sticky points once in a while.

Politician lives in that atmosphere continually. They know if I vote this way, these constituencies will send me love mail and these will send me hate mail.

But you live in that atmosphere, brothers and sisters. It's the spiritual reality, the Christian, and atmosphere of the Christian.

You can't please both the flesh and the spirit at the same time. You must choose then who you will please and who you will grieve. When you please the flesh, you grieve the spirit with whom you were sealed to the day of redemption.

So in order to please the spirit, you're going to have to displease your flesh. The sooner we acknowledge that, the better. The flesh is always crying, please me, please me, please me.

[15 : 35] And you must to your dying day, keep displeasing your flesh. No, I am not going to please you. I'm going to please the spirit. Because these two are so contrary, it means that your flesh will not yield an inch to holiness without a fight.

That's why when you leave this place, resolve to do better, you find that every inch of progress in the Christian life will be met with your flesh's resistance.

It means that every step of holiness, there is a cross on which your flesh must die. That's why Paul says, I die daily.

We don't progress a step in holiness toward God without our flesh dying. The flesh that cries for ease and rest must be given no rest.

The flesh that cries for gratification must be starved as we saw last week. No provision, no groceries for the flesh. And that's what happens when you live by the spirit.

[16 : 43] When you say yes to the spirit's desires, you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. Now the third lesson is that what the spirit produces is far different from the production of the flesh.

flesh. So Paul shows us in this passage the acts of the flesh and then the fruit of the spirit. So you're at a farmer's market and you see two fruit stands side by side.

Here's Mr. Flesh's fruit stand and here's the Holy Spirit's fruit stand. And he's going to show them both to us. Now the produce of the flesh is obvious.

verse 19 says. The works, the acts of the flesh are obvious. This is all the rotten fruit.

Okay? This is stinking, rotten, soft, decaying fruit. And there's four categories of the acts of the flesh.

[17 : 48] First of all, sexual sin, sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery. Now this is something our generation needs to understand. That the anti-God flesh on the inside of every person shows itself in violating God's law for sexuality.

The flesh, one of the ways it shows itself is in violating God's law for sexuality. No one is going to restrain or command my sexual urges that's just who I am.

That's what the flesh produces. And the rotten fruit is everywhere today. It was in Paul's day as well. A second group of fruit is false religion.

You see it there next, idolatry and witchcraft. Well, this stands to reason if the flesh is anti-God, God, if the flesh has this aversion to God, is it any surprise to us to find that it will devise all sorts of false religions that pervert God, that say wrong things about God, and are wrong ways of trying to get right with God.

ways that distort and rob God of his glory, substitutes for the one true God and the one true revealed religion.

[19 : 25] So it stands to this is what the flesh produces, false religion. And I don't just mean over there in those Islam countries, I mean in Christian America.

The flesh creates false religion within Christian churches. And then the next grouping of sins and acts of the flesh are all ill will towards others.

If God is love, as John tells us, then and the flesh is anti-God, then we'll understand why it's anti-love.

And why the flesh seeks to destroy real love, that seeks to do good to others. And so we have it in many different forms, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy.

All various commitments to self that tear down others and destroy unity. And then the last expression of the flesh is a lack of self-control, drunkenness, and its attendant orgies, those parties that go with it, where a man and a woman are given over to unrestrained appetites.

[20 : 47] Well, these are some of the things the flesh produces. There's the farmer's market, there's the fruit stand. A few lessons before we come to the fruit of the spirit. Lessons on the acts of the flesh.

First of all, this is not an exhaustive list. You notice that at the end of it, he says, and the like, etc. In other words, there's more rotten produce out in the truck.

It's not all here on the stand where you see it. There's a lot more. And there were many other sins and are many other sins into which the flesh pulls people.

These were probably picked out specifically because of the problems within the Galatian churches. And so these matters are addressed.

But you know, you have your list. What would your list look like if it was found in Scripture? What sort of rotten fruit is your flesh producing in the garden of your life?

[21 : 51] So we have our lists in addition to these here. Then there's also a warning here, isn't there? In fact, he's made it twice. He says, I told you before, I warned you before, I'm warning you again.

In other words, this is a real important warning because people aren't getting it. And his warning is that those who persist in living like this will not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

It's just that cut and dry. Those who live according to the flesh go to hell.

And please note that jealousy and envy will land people in hell as surely as drunkenness and sexual immorality. They're all in the list, aren't they?

Now, there's not a sin here but can be washed clean in the blood of Christ. If you repent, you will be forgiven. You put faith in Jesus and his blood will wash you whiter than snow of every sin on this list. [22:59] But if you do not repent, that's Paul's intent. If you go on living according to the flesh, you will go to hell. There is no kingdom of God for you.

Important lesson about the acts of the flesh. Another lesson is that your flesh, and I mean yours singular, your flesh is capable of every sin on this list.

And of every sin in this book, your flesh. Peter didn't think so. Lord, though everyone else will deny you, not me.

I'm not capable of that one. And he learned to his shame that he was capable of denying his Lord. three times.

Your flesh is no better than anybody else's flesh. And those who think it is are in for a fall.

[24:07] Because these sins, where do they come from? Remember what Jesus says, they come from inside. All these evils come from within. Mark chapter 7, 23.

And what's inside wants out. And that's why the Christian must keep fighting against the flesh. Because it's in there, and it wants out.

It's like living at the foot of Mount Vesuvius. You're Vesuvius. You've got all these passions of the flesh, desires of the flesh, ideas of the flesh, and they're wanting out. They're rumbling.

They're gurgling in there. And if you do nothing, they will erupt in your life. your flesh will dominate you.

It will become the habit of your life, and it will take you to hell. Such warnings are God's means to keep his children fighting. Okay?

[25:08] Say, but I thought that once you're sitting. These are the ways God keeps his true children fighting. They hear the warning. if you live according to the flesh, you will die.

You'll have no part in the kingdom of heaven. Another lesson about these acts of the flesh is this. If these acts of the flesh do not characterize you, you have the Holy Spirit to thank for it.

Period. You have God the Spirit to thank, because he's living in you, and he is warring against the flesh.

Because this is the stuff that the flesh produces. How thankful we should be for the Holy Spirit, the gift of the Holy Spirit, brothers and sisters. What do we owe to his presence and power in our lives? We owe to him a new heart that wants to please God. We owe to him every inch of progress in the Christian life. We owe to him every battle won against the flesh.

[26:17] Those battles won, scarcely won, we sang. Even those we owe to him. We owe to him every holy thought in our head, every holy desire and action and choice.

Every day that we continue on the road to heaven, we owe it to him that we're not a casualty yesterday and in the ditch of apostasy. Every way of escape we owe to him, every holy resolve fulfilled, every bit of glad obedience.

It's he who works in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. And so by the spirit we do not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Only by the spirit does that happen. So there is the fruit stand of Mr. Flesh. Now we come to the fruit stand of the Holy Spirit within.

The fruit of the spirit. But, notice the contrast, but the fruit of the spirit, verse 22, is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.

[27:31] A few lessons about this list. First of all, the list is not exhaustive either. This is not all that the spirit produces. He's got plenty of other produce as well.

But this is especially the stuff that counters the rotten fruit that has just been mentioned. In other words, you can easily see that to the extent that this fruit is in your life, the rotten fruit won't be.

If you love people, you won't be hating them and be jealous and envious of them, will you? If you're self-controlled, you won't be drunk and so on. We can see that there is a correspondence here and the fruit of the spirit selected here and put on display to counter the fruit, the acts of the flesh that the Galatians were dealing with.

But the same is true of you. It's as you live by the spirit that you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. Notice as well that these fruits are not only found in us, or that they are only found in us because the Holy Spirit is working in us.

They are fruit, the fruit of the spirit. He's the source, he's the originator of them. They're only found in your life because he is in your life. It's not just a normal love, this is a supernatural love.

[28:53] Not a normal joy, just an earthly joy, it's a supernatural joy and so on. And the Christian life is a supernatural life and it's the spirit of God that creates that supernatural aspect of our love and our joy, our peace, our patience, our kindness, our goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control.

Notice as well that many may claim to have the Holy Spirit but here's the greatest proof of all. And notice what the proof is. It's not spectacular gifts, it's rather Christ-like graces.

This is a picture of our Lord Jesus who loved like him, who had joy like him, who had peace like him. This is a list of Christ-like graces and that is the proof of the Spirit's presence in our life.

You simply cannot have God the Holy Spirit living in you and remain unchanged. You can't go on being the same person you used to be before he came to live inside of you.

No, the Holy Spirit produces holy fruit in the life. His presence cannot remain hidden away in some back closet of your heart.

[30:14] No, he's too strong for that. He busts down the doors and he moves in to one room and he changes one room in your heart and he moves into another room and from one stage of glory to another.

He's creating the likeness of Jesus Christ in your heart and life. You can't hide him. And so as he changes you from the inside out, people will notice that you've changed.

So this is what Paul is teaching us here in Galatians chapter 5. How much we need the Holy Spirit to fight against the flesh and what a kind Father in heaven.

What a blessed Jesus to purchase this gift of God the Holy Spirit to live in our hearts. Now, if God the Holy Spirit is stooped to live in our hearts, what's our responsibility to him?

If he's come here to carry on war against the flesh, we saw last week it's our responsibility not to grieve the Holy Spirit. We saw it's our responsibility to clean house by killing sin.

[31:22] If you, by the Spirit, put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. The Holy Spirit has come into my unholy heart, then I must be putting sin to death.

And then we saw we are to starve the flesh and make no provision for it. Give no thought to how to gratify the flesh. So, for instance, if your flesh is given to discontent, not being happy because you don't have certain things, then probably it wouldn't be a good idea for you to just pour over those magazines that come to your mailbox showing you things that you don't have and wish you had. That's to make provision for the flesh and its discontent in your life. And so, with other examples, we need to starve the flesh.

Now, this morning from Galatians, we have our responsibility to the Spirit put in two more ways. The first is to keep in step with the Spirit. Verse 25, Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Now, the word used here is a word that speaks of a particular kind of walking. It's that of a walking in line with another or with others.

[32:43] Some of you know that keeping in step with someone can be quite a challenge. Maybe you learned that in marching band and you know that you're supposed to be in line with these others and it's very difficult to stay in a direct line with them.

Maybe it was in the military parade, but you know something of that challenge. It was about a year ago that I found myself trying to keep in step with our oldest daughter, Carrie, as I walked her down this aisle to give her away in marriage.

And she decided to do the half step thing where it's a half step forward with the right foot and then a half step with the left and then another half with the left and a half with the right and a half with the right and a half.

That's not the way I walk the trash out to the end of the drive. It's not the way you walk the dog. It's not the way you normally walk. There's a special way to walk.

And believe me, it took everything I had just to keep in step with Carrie. We started out and the first half was very rocky. I felt her lunging ahead and me lagging behind or me ahead.

[33:51] I had to keep her in the corner of my eye. Just keep an eye. Even as I looked at the guest, I had to be very conscious of what she was doing if we were going to keep in step.

And I believe it's very similar in what we must do if we are to keep in step with the Spirit. Now we must be ever looking to the Holy Spirit both for direction and power.

And so for direction, if we're to line up our lives with His, if we're to line up our footsteps with His footsteps, if our thoughts and desires are to keep in step with His thoughts and desires, then we

must never leave our eyes off of Him.

We must always be aware and conscious of what it is that He wants. We must be setting our minds on what the Spirit desires, Romans 8, 5.

And where do we learn what the Spirit desires? Where do we learn what the Holy Spirit wants? Where do we learn where the Spirit is taking us, leading us?

[35:04] We don't listen for some voice on the inside. Please, please, you will be deceived. No, we come to His own Word, don't we? And it's here that we see what we must line ourselves up with.

It's here that we see where He's going, where He's leading, and how it is that I am to keep in step with the Spirit. Do you know this is His Word? The holy men were carried along and wrote and spoke, prophets spoke, as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The same Spirit that lives in you produced this book. So if you're going to walk and step with the Spirit, you're going to have your nose in this book, and you're going to be seeing where He's stepping and where He's leading.

Do you know in Hebrews 3, 7, the Bible quotes Psalm 95, a Psalm of David, but it introduces that quote of Psalm 95. in this way.

The Holy Spirit says. Today, if you hear His voice, harden not your heart. He doesn't say, the Holy Spirit said long ago through David.

[36:18] No, it's a present tense. The Holy Spirit says. See, this is the Holy Spirit speaking to you. He is telling you what His desires are, what is His will for you.

And if you keep in step with the Spirit, well then you will keep in step with His Word. Your commitment to keep in step with the Spirit is no greater than your commitment to keep in step with His Word.

So we take every one of His commands recorded here, and we keep in line with it. We make sure that that's where our steps go, and nowhere else. We keep in step with the Spirit.

You see, we're marching through life to the beat of the Holy Spirit's drum. But it's not the only drum being pounded. There's a drum inside of my heart called the flesh, and it's beating opposite beats to the Spirit.

Oh, that's a little more confusing. I've got this inner conflict, this inner tug of war. Now I've got two drums beating, and I must be sure to stay in step with the Spirit's drum beat, rather than the flesh's.

[37:39] To listen to His beat is to listen to His Word. Dear brothers and sisters, if you have fallen off of the regular reading, meditating, memorizing of the Word of God, renew that decision this morning, and cry out for the help of the Holy Spirit as you leave, and you be prepared to have the flesh introduce all sorts of things in your life to keep you from this book.

My father bought my first Bible, and he wrote in it, sin will keep you from this book, or this book will keep you from sin. There's a quote from John Bunyan, but it's true.

the Holy Spirit speaks here to you how to not gratify the desires of the sinful flesh. But the flesh will fight you every step to keep you from setting your mind on what the Spirit desires.

You know, Peter had that problem, didn't he? Jesus had just told the twelve there that he was going to go to Jerusalem. He must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

And Peter took him aside and rebuked him, saying, no, Lord, never, Lord, this will never happen to you. And Jesus turned and said to Peter, get behind me, Satan. You have in mind the things of man, not the things of God.

[39:09] Why did Peter mess up so bad? Because he was not walking in step with the Spirit. And the Spirit had spoken in his word that Jesus must suffer and die in order to save his people.

Peter had in mind the things of man. We like a Messiah who doesn't die and doesn't suffer and doesn't have a cross to die and suffer on and to be put to shame.

And so I ask you, brothers and sisters, what is filling your minds all day long? We must never be far from the mind of the Spirit if we're to keep in step with the Spirit.

It's a huge factor in how closely we keep in step with him. And that is the way we walk out of step with the flesh.

But knowing what he wants and doing what he wants are two different things, aren't they? And so that's why I say we need the Holy Spirit not only for direction, but for power.

[40:22] Direction to know what is the mind of the Spirit, but also I need the Spirit to direct me in my thoughts and desires and actions and will according to his word.

And so to keep in step with the Spirit, we require the Spirit's power. power. that raised Jesus Christ from the dead must be at work in my life if I'm to keep in step with the Spirit.

And that's precisely what the new covenant promises. Ezekiel 36 talked about this new covenant coming when I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you and I will remove from your heart of stone, a heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh and I will put my spirit in you.

Why? Why do we need your spirit in us Lord? To move you to follow my decrees and to make you to be careful to keep my laws. God knew we would need more than information, more than direction.

Yes we do. We must be soaking our minds in it but we need power. We need someone to, a power, a motivation to move our hearts this way or else left to the flesh we would always gravitate toward ourselves.

[41 : 38] And that's precisely what's given us. That's what Jesus purchased for us. The gift of the Holy Spirit that we might have power both to will and to do what pleases him.

And so we come to the Holy Spirit and we say teach me to do your will. That's the kind of teaching I want. Not just facts in the head.

Teach me to do your will. I need the facts in my head but teach me still that I will be a doer of your word. So David comes to God the Spirit in Psalm 119, 133 and he says direct my footsteps according to your word.

Let no sin rule over me. Isn't that a fitting prayer for us? If we know that we have the struggle of the flesh and the spirit and we need help and if we're supposed to walk and step with the spirit to say to the Holy Spirit direct my footsteps according to your word.

I see it. I see it Lord now direct my footsteps. Make me to go in the way of your commands for there I find a light. And that's the way the Christian advances in the Christian life.

[42 : 54] Crying upon, leaning upon, trusting upon the very power that raised Christ from the dead to both show me what his mind is and to lead me in it.

Well, lastly, this passage also shows our responsibility as put in these words that we are to sow to please the spirit. We are to sow, we are to plant and any farmer knows that that's not a passive thing.

You don't plant your field sitting in your easy chair. No, it calls you to activity and Christian, you will need to be actively sowing to please the spirit.

Do not be deceived. Galatians 6, 7. God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his flesh from that flesh will reap destruction. The one who sows to please the spirit from the spirit will reap eternal life.

To live is to be sowing seed. You sowed all week this week. So I wasn't thinking about it that Paul was to live is to sow.

[44 : 00] And there's only two ways to live. Either you sow to please the flesh or you sow to please the spirit. Now to sow to please the flesh means you do the things it wants.

You live according to its desires and ideas. You allow the flesh to have its way. You satisfy it. You gratify its desires and passions. And the same is true of the Holy Spirit.

You sow to please the spirit by doing what the spirit wants. You see we are to pursue what the spirit produces. There's no room for passivity in the Christian life.

Oh if the spirit must do it then I just sit back and watch. No you are to sow to please the spirit. You are to pursue the very things the spirit produces in your life and you do it even as you go and do what he commands you're doing it.

God the spirit help me. Help me. Lord Jesus strengthen me. only two ways to live and either pleasing the flesh characterizes your life or pleasing the spirit characterizes your life.

[45 : 06] He's not talking about perfection here. There is no such thing and he's the first to tell you that but there are still only two kinds of people in the world. There are those who sow to please the flesh and those who sow to please the spirit.

And there are only two harvests that people will reap and it all depends on how they sow. Did you sow to please your flesh? From the flesh you will reap destruction. Did you sow to please the spirit? From the spirit you will reap eternal life. What you reap matches what you sow. Now that's elementary isn't it? Even our children here know that if they get a little cup of dirt and put a bean seed in it they're not looking for a corn plant to grow.



They're looking for beans. Everybody takes that law of sowing and reaping without question in the natural realm. But it is funny how when we come to the spiritual realm we think that we can trick God and we can somehow sow to please the flesh and yet reap from the spirit eternal love.

And that's why Paul starts these verses with this warning, do not be deceived. A lot of people are being deceived. They're thinking I'm a Christian, I go to church, I read my Bible, I do this and that but their life is characterized by doing what the flesh wants.

[46 : 27] When push comes to shove between the spirit and the flesh they gratify the flesh. And yet they're expecting to reap eternal life from the spirit. Oh don't be deceived.

God can't be tricked. A man reaps what he sows and the day of judgment will simply reveal what you sowed in life. Life and your eternal future will be the outcome of what you sowed here.

What kind of harvest are you planting for? You're planting again today. And so the Holy Spirit says repent and believe the gospel. And the flesh says not yet.

Which way are you going to sow my friend? The Spirit says seek those things which are above. And the flesh says live for the immediate pleasures of the earth.

Which way are you sowing? The Spirit says look and live at this wonderful Savior who lived the perfect life you can't and died for sinners. And the flesh says oh just try a little harder maybe you'll make it in at the end.

[47 : 35] Are you sowing to please the flesh or the Spirit? The Spirit says come. The flesh says not now. Well the Lord has spoken by his word.

Brothers and sisters let's rejoice in this unspeakable gift of the Lord Jesus. Because of his work of salvation on the earth God raised him from the dead. Took him right to his throne in heaven.

And the Father and the Son together poured out the Spirit of God upon the church. If you're a Christian this morning you have this gift of God the Spirit living in you.

And so we're going to sing from the overhead a song of thanks to God for this wonderful gift of God the Spirit by which we live and by which we fight and do battle against all of our enemies.

Stand with me as we sing from the overhead. Let's pray. We do bring you our thanks our Father in Jesus name and ask that all of our lost battles and scarcely won battles be covered in his blood.

[48 : 47] Thankful that the blood of Christ cleanses from every sin. Thankful for the gift of God the Holy Spirit. We ask you Holy Spirit to forgive us for the ways we've quenched you this week.

Give us to learn what it is to sow to please you this week. Give us to know increasingly how to walk in step with you. And so may we not gratify the desires of the flesh and bring glory to you the great God who has saved us by yourself Father Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.