

Choosing Well

Unit Topic: Liberating Letters

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Lesson Text: Galatians 5:16-26;

Background Scripture: Galatians 5

Gal 5:16-26 (Gal 5:16) This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.(Gal 5:17) For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

(Gal 5:18) But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.(Gal 5:19) Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,(Gal 5:20) Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,(Gal 5:21) Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.(Gal 5:22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,(Gal 5:23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.(Gal 5:24) And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.(Gal 5:25) If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.(Gal 5:26) Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Teaching Tools:

Word puzzles may be developed from the following site: www.puzzlemaker.com. Also, www.dtlk.com has several visual aids that may be beneficial, as well as www.kidssundayschool.com which provide other helps for teaching.

Bible Journaling may be an interesting way to involve older teens in self-expression of the lessons they are taught. Visit www.lifeway.com/Articles/how-to-start-bible-journaling-in-six-easy-steps to find ways to use this valuable tool to learn and reinforce Scripture.

Movie Clips are a wonderful teaching tool to further explain or create topics of discussion for a variety of age

groups; www.wingclips.com provides clips divided by movie title, category, scripture, or theme. Clips may be accessed on any electronic device.

Objective:

The student will learn that they may enjoy fruitful living when they yield themselves to the Holy Spirit for the manifestation of His fruit.

Questions:

1. Imagine a church that lived by the dictates of the Spirit. Can you describe it?
2. Name one obvious feature of human nature?
3. What happens to a believer that is controlled by the Holy Spirit?
4. What happens when they don't do everything right?
5. Why did Paul instruct the Galatian Church to exercise humility?

The Lesson:

As I began writing this lesson and looking at the title, I reflected on one of the lessons to my grandbaby in Pre-K. His teacher always told him to make good choices. T

We are arriving at the close of Paul's dissertation to the Church in Galatia. His main concern for them was that they maintain the doctrine they had been taught as it was the one that provided true freedom from the law.

Let's face it; the law had nothing but condemnation. Last week Paul taught that the circumcised man is indebted to the entire law, as he uses the law as his measuring stick for righteousness. With this thought in mind, he will never measure up because the law was entirely too stringent and impossible to maintain. There are no rituals, rules, and regulations that can make man undeserving of God's righteous indignation. All have sinned (Romans 3:23); all are born in sin and conceived in iniquity (Psalm 51:5); furthermore, we are in a constant internal battle with our sinful nature (Romans 7:14-21). Knowing this, what's a man to do? Trust God and Christ's finished work on the Cross.

First, Paul writes that when one walks in the Spirit, he shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. It is my opinion that believers will always be met with opportunities to do wrong or behave badly however, we must be intentional in our Christian walk and avoid those things that cause us some issues. I write a daily devotional on Facebook and repeatedly find myself telling my readers that they

must be honest with who they are. The enemy certainly knows and will use every trick, involving the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, to move you from your santimonious platform. He really wants you to denounce God; so many have even rejected Christ, for them there is no recompense.

Paul deals with the saved man's dual nature in verse 17 before he moves forward to describe the personality and behaviors of those who operate according to their sin nature (under the law/works of the flesh). Remember the flesh has a sinful nature; it wants what it wants, when it wants it, how it wants it, and does not care who doesn't like it. Again, it is selfish, insolent, arrogant, childish, petty, and generally, *purposefully*, difficult to deal with.

He reminds us that if we are Spirit-controlled, we are not under the law; the law and the flesh, used interchangeably, represent man's inability to free himself from the clutches of sin, and declares him unrighteous before God. **The law only condemns**. It identifies sin and boldly states man's inability to live righteously according to God's holy standard. Since the flesh was against the Spirit, it is impossible for it to exhibit Christlike behavior without the influence of the Spirit of God.

Paul identifies the work of the flesh as:

1. Sexually immoral – adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, revelry (drunken carousing that often leads to sexual immorality).
2. Spiritually immoral – idolatry, witchcraft, hatred/hostility/opposition/variance (disagreeable for the sake of being disagreeable), emulations (envy/jealousy), wrath, strife, seditions (division), heresies (creating one's own religiosity).
3. Envyings – planning, plotting, scheming.
4. Murders
5. Drunkenness
6. Revelings

Paul warns those who engage in these behaviors shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Funny thing about that word 'shall' – it implies the absolute; in other words, those who engage in the aforementioned behaviors **will not** get into heaven. I believe we need to keep in mind that this warning was given to the Church. If we are going to exhibit Christlikeness we must make a conscious, daily, decision to intentionally follow Him and be like Him. He will not override our will and certainly does not force us into any situation. We are where our desires lead us (scary thought)!

Spirit-led folk exhibit spiritual fruit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness,

temperance – against such there is no law. Saints, you can have as much of this fruit as you can stand. You won't gain weight; it's good for diabetics; they won't cause any health, physical, or spiritual concerns. There is no condemnation against this fruit and therefore, no judgment.

Coincidentally, love is the first and most important fruit that comes from being filled and led by the Holy Spirit. Imagine the peaceful life we'd have if we just have enough love! Love is the quintessential of Christianity. I absolutely adore Paul's description in 1 Corinthians 13, especially verses 4 – 7; in summary, love suffers long with all people-it refuses to leave one soul behind; it is kind; it does not envy; it is not proud, boastful, or arrogant. This love can yield to those in authority and is humbled in its dealings with others. This love esteems others more highly than itself; it is selfless and giving; it doesn't think evil and does not engage in plotting revenge. This love rejoices in the truth and does not stoop to gossip or useless banter. This love bears all, believes all, hopes for all, and endures all. This love reflects the love of Christ who gave His life as a ransom for many. It is imperative that believers possess this type of love; its base must be broad enough to provide a sturdy foundation for the other spiritual fruit.

Once we have accepted Christ, we abandon, or based on the word Paul uses – crucify the flesh. To crucify the flesh means to put to death its desires and appetite. Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by faith of the Son of God**, who loved me, and gave Himself for me! (emphasis mine)"

IF WE LIVE IN THE SPIRIT, LET US ALSO WALK IN THE SPIRIT – Christianity is our lifestyle. It is how we manage money, our lives, rear our children, complete our daily tasks at work, provide for our family, love our husbands/wives and neighbors. We are part of the family of Christ and should resemble Him in everything we do, not just at Church, but in the world.

The Apostle's last warning in the 5th chapter is for us to always look toward humility for which Christ provided the greatest example (John 13). When we exhibit humility, the giving of oneself for somebody else, we could live harmoniously.

I love how the last verse reads in the Amplified Classic Version: *Let us not become vainglorious and self-conceited, competitive and challenging and provoking and irritating to one another, envying and being jealous of one another*. I believe that wraps everything. The

Church must be different from the world; otherwise, why would anyone want to join? Just a thought!

Be Salt! Be Light! Be Blessed!