

Keep in Step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:13-26)

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[0 : 00] But I'll be reading from the NIV. So today is Galatians chapter 5, verse 13 to 26. So this is the word of God. You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free.

But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh. Rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command.

Love your neighbor as yourself. If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. So I say, walk 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 are not to do whatever you want.

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. The acts of the flesh are obvious. Sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery, idolatry, and witchcraft.

[1 : 04] Hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissension, factions, and envy. Drunkenness, orgies, and the like.

I warn you, 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, forbearance, 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. Lots in there for us to reflect on. But Pastor Peter.

Thank you so much. That was beautiful. Nice here. So, thank you so much.

[2 : 27] It's always a joy to come and be with you guys. And enjoy your smiling faces and your friendliness and the way you love to serve the Lord together.

It's always an encouragement to us. Let's pray again, shall we? Dear Lord, as we turn to your Holy Word now, we pray that you would indeed speak to us.

And we ask that you would help us to listen and also to obey, to follow the Holy Spirit's commands and directions for us.

We thank you, Lord. We ask you to help us now as we think about this passage together. In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, let's see.

Yeah, we're going to think about walking in the Spirit, in step with the Holy Spirit from this passage.

[3 : 23] I don't know how many of you have ever done military training. Have you? I remember when I, probably not your generation, but I remember when I was a young guy at school.

We used to have boys' brigade at church. And we used to have to do drill. You know about drill? Marching drill? We used to have to march. And the drill commander, the person, captain of the squad, would say to us, Left, right, left, right, left, right.

Squad, about, turn. And you'd go to like this. And then, squad, halt. So you'd have to listen to the drill commander.

And keep in step with your other soldiers. If you're a soldier, or just like us in boys' brigade, we were naughty, actually. I can remember having to march around the church hall.

And we used to have these caps, you know, boys' brigade uniform, with a cap on the sort of like side of your head. And I remember, I don't think it was me, but it was one of the other boys.

[4 : 41] It must have been one of the other boys. We'd be marching behind, you know, in like this. And then, when the captain was not looking, he just knocked the cap off the guy in front of him.

And it would fall down on the ground. And the captain said, oh! You know, so, you've got to listen to the commander. You can't do your own thing. And you've got to walk in step with your other fellow soldiers.

And so, as we look at this passage today, it's from Galatians. And this is a letter that Paul wrote to churches in that Roman province of Galatia, which is present-day Turkey. Sort of central Turkey. It's quite a big province, isn't it? You just look at the green on the map. And it was in the southern part of the province of Galatia that Paul and Barnabas, do you remember? On the first missionary journey, they went to those cities. They started in the town of Derbe. They went to Lystra and Iconium. And then to, oh no, it's the other way around, wasn't it? [5 : 46] And they went from Cyprus up to Pisidian Antioch and then down to Lystra and Iconium and Derbe and then back again. Anyway, so that was where they founded the church on that first missionary journey.

And Paul was writing to them, those churches in Galatians. And he had a big problem. He had a real concern when he wrote to the churches.

And it was all about these false believers, these people. He actually called them false believers. They were kind of Jewish teachers who were telling the people that, because in that church there were not only Jewish people, like Paul and Barnabas who were Jewish, they reached the Jewish people first, of course.

So many did believe, saw Jesus was the Messiah and believed. But many Gentiles, non-Jewish people also believed. And so the church was a mix. There were Jews and Gentiles.

[6 : 50] And these kind of Jewish teachers who were in the church were telling the Gentile Christians, the non-Jewish ones, whoo, if you want to be a Christian, actually, it's not enough to just believe in Jesus.

You've also got to follow the Jewish laws and customs to be saved, especially the rite of circumcision. Because that was something that the Jewish, was a real sign of being Jewish. And so, not surprisingly, the Jewish Christians, the Gentile Christians were confused. Here were these people in the church, who seemed to know the Bible, you know, the Old Testament scriptures much better than they did, who were telling them, oh, no, it's not enough to believe in Jesus, you've got to do all these other things.

And so they were confused. And Paul, when he heard about this, was very, very concerned. And he wanted to remind all the believers. If you look up in Galatians, in the earlier verses, in chapter, for example, chapter 3, verse 26, he reminds them, all children of God, you are all children of God through faith.

And he also said in verse 28 of chapter 3, he said, there is neither Jew nor Gentile. Don't make a big fuss about whether you're Jewish or non-Jewish.

[8 : 21] There's neither Jew nor Gentile. Neither slave nor free. That was pretty revolutionary, too, because there were people who were slaves there, and there were people who were free citizens, not slaves.

And there's neither male nor female. Now, to us, that doesn't seem a big issue because, you know, we know men and women are equal. We're different.

Genes are different, isn't it? XX and XY, male and female, different. But in God's sight, we're all precious and we're equal. We're partners in God's creation.

But in that day in culture, it was very much male-dominated. And so he's saying, there's no male nor female. We're all one.

We're all one in Christ Jesus. So this was a very, very important message for the early church. And Paul was wanting them to remember this. And he wanted the Gentile Christians to know you don't have to become Jewish to be a Christian.

[9 : 26] And he says there in chapter 2, verse 16, a person is not justified by works of the law. That's the Jewish law, you know.

That's very detailed Jewish law. There's nothing wrong with the law, but it doesn't make you a Christian to keep all those laws. It's by faith in Jesus Christ.

Now, Paul explained the law is perfect. There's nothing wrong with God's law. And we're all sinners. But we're not good enough in our own to get to heaven.

We need God's grace, God's mercy, like we were singing earlier. So, some have called this book of Galatians, Charter of Christian Freedom.

It's amazing. Paul's teaching us that when we put our trust in Jesus, we are set free from the burden, the burden of trying to earn salvation by keeping the law, by keeping all those rules and regulations.

[10 : 34] That burden is lifted. And he teaches us that in Christ, we are saved from the penalty of sin, and also the power of sin. You know, the penalty is, because we sin, we cut off from God, and we will die.

We're saved from that penalty, that we justly deserve. But we're also saved from the power of sin. The power of sin in our everyday lives.

This is the wonderful message of the gospel. And he's teaching us we can experience true freedom as Christians, real freedom, when we walk in step with the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, where we obey the commander, his every command, left, right, left, right, left, turn.

Whatever the Lord says to us, we walk in obedience and walk in step. Obey his every command.

So, I've chosen, just for us today, to look at these verses that were so beautifully read for us.

This is a very well-known section of Galatians. So, we're going to think about the meaning of freedom. And, and of course, it means different things.

[11 : 51] It means different things in different contexts, doesn't it? For example, in the political context, you think of a dictatorship. When a dictatorship or an evil regime is overthrown, people celebrate.

They feel free at last. And, I just think of Nelson Mandela from South Africa. I think you know that I, maybe mentioned before, I was born in Zimbabwe, which is a country north of South Africa.

But, my ancestors, many of them were missionaries in what's now South Africa. But, South Africa, when I was growing up and at university, was under the apartheid regime, so-called, where it was white privilege.

And, those, voting were white people. And, and, in some areas, mixed race people could also vote. But, black people weren't allowed to vote. There was no, there was, I mean, when you think about it, it's ridiculous.

It's totally wrong. And, Mandela was one, a young, a lawyer, who stood up against apartheid. Now, he did do some bad things. He was, he was, guilty of, planning to overthrow government and all that, and blow up power, power lines and so on.

[13 : 05] So, he was put in prison, 27 years. Imagine that. 27 years in prison, a political prisoner. And, but when he was released, and apartheid was, was changed, and they had a free election, free election, all the people of South Africa.

It was amazing, amazing day. I think it was 1994, somewhere around there. I can't remember exactly now. We were long since in Hong Kong by then.

But it was a very special day. And his autobiography is called, Long Walk to Freedom. Long Walk to Freedom. When, when he came out of prison, and, and, and they had the election, the white government also admitted that we needed to change, needed to be free elections.

Amazing day for South Africa. But you know, there was something more important than, Mandela getting freedom from prison, as a political prisoner. And you know what that was?

In prison, he became a Christian. And, that one of his guards, was a wonderful Christian man, and had an influence on his life. And he gave his life to Christ.

[14 : 18] And when Mandela came out, he spoke of reconciliation, and forgiveness. And South Africa, was saved from chaos, and from bloodshed.

Largely because of the leadership of this man, Mandela. Who found freedom, not just from prison, but in his own heart. He was able to forgive.

So, does, now, now South Africa, I don't know what you know about South Africa, but, it's, it doesn't mean there are no problems. In fact, today, there are huge problems in South Africa, because, many people, whether you're white or black, if you don't find, like Mandela, don't find freedom, forgiveness, in your heart, you're still going to have a racial issue.

And, South Africa is still struggling with those things. So, political freedom, is a very much up and down thing. But, the spiritual freedom, is so much more important.

When you think about, other kinds of freedom, some people think of freedom, as, you know, do whatever you like. This is, this is the, the mindset, of, our present, the West.

[15 : 34] You know, the left, you know about left and right, and, in, political sense. the left, the media, for example, very much, pushing, LGBTQ, pushing, abortion, pushing, euthanasia, all these kind of things.

And, people think, I'm free, I can do what I like. But, is that freedom? Is that real freedom? In fact, we find out that, in our society, in the West, people have far more issues, mental health issues, for

one.

But, we, freedom to do your own thing, is not real freedom. Would you agree with that? Some people, think, oh, you know, sexual freedom, I can do what, I can do what I like, I can, I can have this boyfriend, or girlfriend, and we, we just go together, and then, if it doesn't work out, we can switch to somebody else.

Is that real freedom? Is that the way to find, um, real joy, and happiness in life? Absolutely not. So, the answer is no.

So then, what is, Christian freedom? What do we mean as Christians, when we speak about freedom? And so, this is my first point. Saying, well, he's been talking a long time, he's only just got to his first point.

[16:53] But, we're getting there, we're getting there. First point is, what is Christian freedom? It's a question. Verses 13 to 15. Paul, had already explained, in Galatians, that true freedom, is freedom, freedom, from sin, and freedom, from the burden, of guilt.

That's real freedom. Freedom from sin, and freedom from the burden, of guilt. And this is the freedom, that Mandela experienced. And, God in his grace, sending, like we sang earlier, sending his son, to die for us.

Despite the fact, that we were living in rebellion. Despite the fact, we were, putting our fist up at God. So often, God calls us, in his love, to turn from our sin, to turn to Christ.

He calls us to freedom. That's how, this verse actually, talks about this. And, it's available, this freedom, is available, to all who will repent, and believe the gospel.

That's the wonderful thing. I'll never forget, a few months ago, maybe six months ago, there was a Chinese brother, in our church, where we worship. he, he, he said to me, he said, I'm, I'm so, it's wonderful, I'm free.

[18:14] Jesus has forgiven my sins. And, the beaming on his face, I could see, he was just, the burden, had been lifted. He was a, you know, the gong chien, we talk about, somebody's got a work visa, to come to work in New Zealand.

And his, I think his family, but anyway, he'd come to know Jesus, he'd been to the Alpha course, and he'd given his heart, to the Lord, and he just, he just was so thrilled, to be free, from sin.

I've been forgiven. So, that's the kind of thing, Paul is writing about. So, verse 13, he says, you, my brothers and sisters, were called, to be free.

Called to be free. It, it, it doesn't mean, that we can do whatever we like. It doesn't, it doesn't mean, that we can ignore God, it's law, does it. But we're set free, from sin, from having to carry on, doing what the world, wants us to do.

And that, this is, this is what the false teachers, were teaching, were telling the people, they said, oh, Paul says, you just believe, and you're free. But he said, he said, no, no, no, no, no, no, you, the danger there, is you're going to be doing whatever you like.

[19:27] But is that what Paul said? Paul wasn't saying, believe, and do whatever you like. No. He goes on in this verse. You see? But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh.

We can't use God's grace as an excuse for doing whatever we want. Christian freedom is not license to throw off all restraints.

You know? Christians, Christian freedom, this is what I like now. Christian freedom is freedom from sin, not freedom to sin.

Don't you get the difference there? It's freedom from sin, not freedom to sin. And so Paul, in another letter, he talks about this, for it is by grace you've been saved through faith.

And this is not your, from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast.

Yes? Salvation is a gift. It's a gift. From God, we're saved by grace through faith, not by works, not by self-effort, not by trying to reform ourselves, not trying to improve ourselves.

[20:42] I remember when I was a student at university, how many of you at university now? Are some of you studying at university, uni now? Any of you? That's it?

Okay. I remember when I was at uni, you might say, whoa, that must have been a long time ago. It was. It was a long time ago. But I remember this fellow student, a young girl, who was sort of on the edges of our Christian group.

We had a lovely Christian group. It was one of the biggest groups on campus. We had about 300 members. And she was a churchgoer. But she came to me one day.

We happened to bump into each other on the campus. And she said to me, because she knew I was Christian, she said, how can you be so sure that you are saved? Isn't it rather presumptuous? Isn't it rather full of pride? Isn't it pride to think? Aren't you being proud to say, I'm saved, I'm going to go to heaven?

[21 : 52] Oh, that took me a bit by surprise, huh? But I said to her, well, what do you think? And she said, she said, I believe if my good works in my life outweigh the bad works, then God will let me into heaven.

Do you think that's right? She said, she thought if all the good things were more than the bad things, she would be allowed into heaven.

But that's not true, is it? I said, no, actually, I believe that it's not, by my effort, it's the word of God. I know I'm saved because of what the Bible tells me. The Bible says, whoever believes will be saved. And, salvation is a gift.

The Lord gives us a gift. How do you get a gift? How does a gift become yours? Somebody wants to give you a gift.

[22 : 57] You receive it, right? It's simple. They offer it to you, and you receive it, and it becomes yours. That's a gift. It's not something you earn, not something you work for.

Your salary, if you're working, your salary is what you earn. You deserve to get your salary. But a gift is something you don't deserve, but it becomes yours when you receive it.

And so I said to her, I said, salvation is a gift, and God has promised it to me, and I've received it. So, I don't say, oh, God, you've given me salvation.

I wonder if I'll be saved now. No. It's a gift. I've received it. It's mine. So, this is the wonderful thing about the gospel. And so, I wonder about you.

I wonder if you have received that wonderful gift of salvation. salvation. I hope so. Now, does that mean, when we receive God's salvation, does it mean that, you know, that we can just do what we like?

[24 : 07] No. It means that, as Christians, we still want to keep the law. We still want to follow the Lord. We receive his salvation, but it doesn't mean that we go and do whatever we like.

And this is true in everyday life, when you think about it. There's traffic rules. There are speed limits. I remember one time, when we lived on the shore, I was going down the road where we lived, and I'd been out somewhere, and I was keen to get back to see my lovely wife.

And I just went a little bit over the speed limit. The problem was, the problem was, it was downhill. And I didn't think to control the speed of the car.

And I saw a police car coming in the opposite direction. And I just, I just looked at my speedometer, you know, the speedometer, is it? Speedometer.

And I think it was close to 70. And it's a little bit too fast. And, but I thought, well, you've gone past. But then in my rear view mirror, huh, I saw this police car, do a U-turn in the street.

[25 : 20] And then, then the lights went, and then, oh dear, I was hoping he's going to go past me, something else. It can't be me. But he came right up behind me, and as I pulled into our driveway, he pulled in right behind.

Now, I said to him, oh no, I'm a pastor, you know. I, I know Pastor Albert, a pucker. No, I didn't say anything like that. No, I'm a good, I'm good. No, no, I keep the law.

I never, I never speed. No, no, I couldn't say anything. I said sorry even, but it still didn't help. He said, he wrote out, speeding ticket. So, you know, when we break the law, we still have to pay the consequences in everyday life.

And when you think about it, even in sport, if you, if you're playing football, and you kick, you kick the ref, or you kick your, somebody, the other team guy, or punch him in the face, or, or whatever, you're going to get the red card.

You're going to be off. Or if you're doing exams, and you found cheating, you probably get zero. Right? So, there are rules in life, and we know that.

[26 : 27] So, we've got to remember, when we go along with our old sinful nature, the old us, before we came to know the Lord, we're going to have to pay a price for whatever we do.

we receive salvation, but as Paul says, it's not to indulge the flesh, but in order, we can serve one another, humbly in love.

And this, as he says, the entire law is fulfilled, in keeping this one command, love your neighbor as yourself. So, Christianity, we receive this freedom, this gift, forgiveness, but we don't, it doesn't

mean we go and just do what we like, it means we're called to now serve, to love others. Serving one another, and loving our neighbors, these are things that build up the church. And, and you know, when, when non-Christians come to church, and they find that we, they, you well, we welcome them, they're loved, accepted, they're going to want to follow the Lord as well. But these guys, in the church there in Galatia, in southern Galatia, they were stirring up trouble, saying, oh, you've got to be like this, oh, you've got to do that, you can't just believe in Jesus. It was actually causing disunity in the church.

[27 : 38] It was bringing division between the believers, what they were doing. So it's no wonder that Paul says, in verse 15, if you bite and devour each other, watch out, or you will be destroyed by each other.

So, you know, Christian freedom, Christian freedom leads us to love one another, leads us to serve one another, and not to find fault with one another, and not to bite and devour one another.

So, then how do we live in freedom? How do we obey the will of God, and avoid being pulled down by our old sinful nature? How do we keep from losing our joy, and once again getting entangled in our old way of life?

Well, that brings us to the second point. So, the second point for our message today is, the sinful nature, and the spirit. These are two, that are in opposition to each other.

Verses 16 to 18. You know, we cannot live in freedom, as Christians, unless we walk, in the spirit. And this is what John Stott, you'd know of him, he said this.

[28 : 50] He said, Enjoyment of Christian liberty, that's freedom, depends on the Holy Spirit. True, it is Christ who sets us free, but without the continuing, directing, sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, our liberty is bound to degenerate into license.

And so, Paul says, in verse 16, So I say, walk by the spirit, walk by the spirit, and you will not gratify, gratify the desires of the flesh.

Now, of course, the flesh is not, you know, our physical bodies. When he talks, when the Bible talks about the flesh, it's our old sinful nature, our old sinful self.

It's not our physical bodies. But, our bodies are affected by our choices, by our acts, by the acts of the old sinful nature.

It's just, you know, like water. Water runs wherever it pleases, but always downhill. And in the same way, our old sinful nature, it does whatever it pleases.

[30 : 03] Have you found that? Your old sinful nature, the old you, before you gave your heart to Jesus, it just takes you, do what you want, and it's always downhill. It's always away from the Lord.

It's always the path of least resistance. It's always that path away from God, into your own old ways. So, the only way to counter, the only way to overcome, that old sinful self, is to walk in the spirit.

is to surrender, your will, to God. You know, like us boys, in the boys brigade, our old sinful nature, knock the hat off the guy in front, do what we want to do.

But the only way to, walk in the right way, pleasing to God, is to listen to the, the captain, to obey his every command, and to keep in step, with our, our brothers and sisters, in the Lord.

So, this Paul says, that we are, the only way, is to walk in the spirit, walk by the spirit. While we're in this body, we'll always be conscious, of the struggle, between the old sinful self, that self that wants to do our own thing, and the Holy Spirit.

[31 : 24] So, what we need to learn to do, is to feed, the spiritual life, to feed our spiritual life, and to let our old sinful nature starve.

Don't feed, our old sinful nature. Don't, don't go that way. But, just, let him die off, weaker and weaker every day. And by God's grace, let us, let the Holy Spirit, make us stronger and stronger.

So, that's what Paul says, in verse 17, for the flesh, desires, what is contrary, that's flesh, remember, it's not your body, it's old sinful nature, desires, what is contrary, to the spirit.

And the spirit, what is contrary, to the flesh. They are in conflict, with one another. And I say, oh boy, yeah, I experience that. Do you experience that sometimes?

What you, what your, old nature wants you to do, and what you know is right, do you find that a little bit of a struggle sometimes? Well, don't be discouraged, because sometimes, the well-known Christian leaders, godly people, who God has used greatly, also have experienced this.

[32 : 36] This is just one example, I, I, I found, I thought about, is what Charles Spurgeon said. Now, he was a famous, a Baptist preacher, in the 19th century, in London.

You've heard of the tab, right? Tabernacle in Auckland, the city, the tabernacle, that's named after, Spurgeon's tabernacle, in London.

And Spurgeon's son, one is Joseph Spurgeon, came to the tab, here in Auckland. For a number of years, he was the pastor here, in the, in the 1900s, 1800s, late 1800s.

But Spurgeon, his dad, was a famous preacher. His sermons were printed, thousands of copies, his church, church was packed, you know, packed, and his sermons were sent all over London.

This is a great, all over London, and, and, he's got these huge books about his sermons. And, the amazing thing, this is what Spurgeon himself said. He said, my own experience, is a daily struggle, with evil within.

[33 : 44] Hmm, really? That's what he said. And, but, he also said, we have an almighty helper, even Jesus, the captain, of our salvation, the captain, who is ever with us, and who assures us, that we shall eventually come off, more than conquerors, through him.

So, brothers and sisters, don't be discouraged, if you find, a struggle, sometimes, as a Christian, that you, your old sinful nature, pulls you this way, pulls you this way, and yet, you know, in your heart, the Holy Spirit is saying, don't do that, don't go that way, follow me, follow me.

That is a, a daily choice. Sometimes, many times in the day, we have to choose, to feed, the spirit, and let the old nature starve.

So, verse 18, Paul says, but if you are led, by the spirit, you are not, under the law. You see, it's not, by rules and regulations, that we're saved, but we are, led by the spirit, and we, we, you know, it's all about a relationship, relationship with Jesus.

It's, it's about, inward transformation. It's not, outward religious, trying to, oh, I've got to try and be religious, I've got to try and be good. That's, that's religion.

[35 : 11] Nothing, nothing wrong with trying to be good, but, that's religion. Jesus wants to transform us, from within. We're led by the spirit. The good news is, when we admit, our helplessness, as Christians, and when we surrender, to the Holy Spirit, the Lord is with us.

He's our captain. He gives us, the ability, to say no, to the world, the flesh, sinful nature, and the devil.

See, those three, you know about those three, right? The world, the atmosphere, the society around, the whole, the pressure is all, do your own thing.

Do what you like. This is fun. This is where you're going to find fun. This is going to be, oh, this looks, this looks good. That's what, the world, the pressure of the world, and then the flesh, we know the flesh, sinful nature, that also goes, ooh, wants to go downhill.

And, the third one, devil. Don't forget, the devil is there too. The devil's out to get you, and me. He wants to trip us up.

[36 : 22] He wants to tempt us. So, say, how on earth can I ever become, how can I live the Christian life? Impossible on my own strength, right?

I must walk in the spirit. I must live in the spirit. And so, it's surrendering. Now, there's a wonderful hymn that I like.

It's probably old hymn to many of you. But these, you as mother, you know, your English is all very good. So, this is, I love these words. Make me a captive, Lord, and then I shall be free.

Isn't that a paradox? That seems strange. How can the Lord make me a captive, and then I'll be free? And then, second line of this, first verse, force me to render up my sword.

Ah, here's my sword. And I shall conquer me. I love it. Don't you see the paradox of surrendering to the Lord, giving up your sword to the Lord, surrender, and then you'll be a conqueror.

[37 : 39] Ah, this is a wonderful truth, isn't it? And I think this, maybe this, this hymn was, the hymn writer was maybe thinking of Augustine, the famous theologian of the fourth century, because he said something similar.

He said, make me a captive, Lord, and then I shall be truly free. Truly free. So, brothers and sisters, this is my second point that we can remember.

Surrender. Let's surrender our lives to Jesus and walk in obedience to the spirit. And then we'll be free. Then we're free. We're not under the condemnation of sin or under the power of sin anymore. We can be free to serve God. And, you know, having written about this war between the old sinful nature and the spirit within us, Paul goes on to mention in this passage some of the acts that are associated with the old sinful nature and he contrasts them with the fruit produced in our lives by the spirit.

See, it's not you struggling to be a Christian, struggling to do good. It's the Holy Spirit producing those beautiful gifts in you. But those other sinful nature things, that's what comes naturally.

[39 : 01] Let's look at that. This is our final point. The acts of the flesh contrasted with the fruit of the spirit. If you read verses 19 to 21 as our sister read to us earlier, it's quite a scary list, isn't it?

It's a real scary list. Oh dear, those acts of the flesh, Paul says, are obvious. Sexual immorality, and that's all kinds of aspects of that.

Impurity, debauchery, and then there's idolatry and witchcraft. There's these other things that we sometimes don't think of as being all that hatred. Discord, jealousy.

Ooh, just think about these things. Envy, drunkenness, orgies and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

When you think about these things, just think about the endless trouble and distress in your own life and in the lives of those around you by these things.

[40 : 04] you know, sexual immorality, hatred. What trouble is caused by these things? Jealousy? Fits of rage? Oh, selfish ambition, drunkenness.

You just have to look at society around and say, well, that's a terrible list. And these are the acts of the old sinful nature. Scary, isn't it?

But that's the way we could all go if we follow our old sinful nature, one way or another. So, we have to stop feeding, stop feeding the old sinful nature because all that that will produce is these kind of things, right?

Rather, let us ask God to produce in us the fruit of his spirit. Now, what a wonderful list we find there. You could see in verses 22 to 26, there are nine fruits.

And not exhaustive like the other ones, it's not an exhaustive list, this is not exhaustive, but there are nine fruits that are mentioned here, and we can look at them in groups of three, three groups of three.

[41 : 12] So, the first group is love, joy, peace. And that love is God's love, is sacrificial love, it's true love, it's not the kind of selfish love, this is self-giving love, and love for God, love for those around us, even those who give us a hard time, that's supernatural, isn't it?

That's supernatural love. And joy is also something that's produced by the Holy Spirit. It's not dependent on circumstances, it's not dependent on feelings.

You know, some people can even be joyful in times of suffering, and pain. It's amazing. peace. That's the deep joy that God gives, even in suffering times.

And then peace is another fruit of the Holy Spirit. Peace with God, peace with God, and peace with one another, with other people, even people who give us a hard time, and then peace within ourselves.

This is amazing. God's peace can be filling our hearts, it's a deep thing. And then the second group of three, forbearance or patience, kindness, and goodness.

[42 : 30] And the Holy Spirit again helps us to be patient. That's something we don't have on our own, is it? Most people, we don't like to be patient with others, especially those who attack us or oppose us, but the Holy Spirit helps us to be patient, and show kindness instead of resentment, instead of wanting to get our own back, he helps us to be kind, and to seek to do good in word and deed, goodness.

Even when we're unfairly treated, you know, these responses are supernatural. They're the fruit that the Spirit produces in us.

And the last triad, or three, group of three, is faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The Holy Spirit enables us to be strong and mature in our Christian walk.

We are faithful, we're reliable, we keep our word, and like Jesus, we're gentle. We're gentle with other people, with children.

We're gentle with elderly people, we're gentle, and we're gentle with our spouse. Isn't that wonderful? You know, when a husband gets angry or bullies his wife, that's terrible, absolutely terrible, because men are stronger physically and so on, but this is Christian, this is the Holy Spirit produces fruit, gentleness, gentleness.

[44 : 04] Oh, it's a wonderful gift, a wonderful fruit, isn't it? And even under pressure, the Holy Spirit helps us to be self-controlled, and not to lose our temper, to just keep calm, to reject temptation, to overcome addictions.

Oh, how I could talk about that as well. Hey, what about the addiction that comes from internet games, or gaming, or playing endlessly, endless times, scrolling through?
I mean, it's a temptation all of us face, but self-control, oh, Lord, I need more self-control. My wife tells me that all the time, especially when it comes to eating certain things.
And I thank her. She says if it wasn't for her, I'd probably be fatter than I am. But, you know, it's true, we need self-control.

Whatever our weak area, sometimes we give in, we give in to that, the temptation to just go the easy road. But the Lord wants us to be self-controlled.

[45 : 13] And it's the fruit of the Spirit. He's the only one who can help us overcome those addictions, or those weaknesses. So, may each one of us who's a follower of Jesus, ask the Holy Spirit to fill us, to say, Lord, please, let these fruits, let these fruits be growing in me.

Let me produce, you, Lord, produce those fruits. I want you to produce those fruits in me. Now, Paul ends this section with more excellent advice.

He says, those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. That's passions and desires.

That's all from the old self. So, we've crucified that old self, 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 one another. This is a way to victory, brothers and sisters.

[46 : 21] You know, people talk about, oh, you have to bear your cross, take up your cross. It's like, oh, I've got to suffer. I've got to go through, this is my cross that I have to bear.

No, no, no. The cross that we've got to bear is taking our old self and nailing it to that cross. That's what the Bible says. Whoever wants to be my disciple, said Jesus, must deny themselves and take up their cross daily.

The cross was a place of crucifixion, of dying to self. Follow me. So, this is, as Christians, let's say, Lord, help me to take up my cross every day, die to myself and surrender everything to God.

So, Paul, this is our last slide for today and then you can all breathe a sigh of relief. Old Anderson's going to close up now. But this is the final verse for today. It says, since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Paul urges the Christians in Galatia, and he urges you and he urges me, to keep in step with the Spirit.

[47 : 35] Just like soldiers, you know, in the army or on parade, keep in step with their fellow soldiers, obey all the orders of the captain, the commander, we too must align our lives with the Holy Spirit and each day live in conformity with the will of the Lord.

And when we do that, we won't have any time to be provoking one another, be conceited or envying one another. We'll just be wanting to love one another and support one another.

It's a whole different life style, isn't it? We'd rather walk together in love, keeping in step with our wonderful Lord, obeying his every command. So that's a great passage, isn't it?

I just think it's so, it's revolutionary stuff, this keep in step with the Spirit. That's what Christianity is all about. It's not like what those false teachers are saying, oh you've got to do this, you've got to do that, you've got to do this, you've got to, oh that's like that's tying us all up.

It's not feeding the old sinful nature but living in the Spirit, freedom, true freedom in obedience to the Holy Spirit. Let's pray.

[48 : 50] Dear Lord, I just pray for each one of my dear brothers and sisters here, these wonderful mostly young folks, Lord, and I just pray that each one of them may just give their lives to you 100%, follow you knowing that yours is the way of freedom, following you Jesus and letting you by your Holy Spirit produce in our lives these wonderful fruits.

Lord, this is the way of freedom, this is the way to happiness, this is the way to having a life that's worth living, Lord.

and we look forward to seeing you in glory one day but as we allow to live here, our life here may be fruitful for you. I pray that each one of these young folks may enjoy all the fullness of life in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit each day.

And for any who are not Christians amongst us, I pray that they would open their hearts to you. They could know that they're going to heaven. Not wonder if what they've done is good enough because it's never good enough.

We're never good enough. Our old sinful nature is never good enough. Oh Lord, help them to turn to you, to surrender to you, to put their trust and faith in you, even today.

[50 : 11] Maybe they're from a Christian home. Maybe they've known the Bible quite a long time. But help them, Lord, to personally come to know you, surrender their all to you, and step out with the Spirit into a new life in Christ.

We pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.