

THE ONE YEAR BIBLE CLUB

WITH TEACHING COMMENTARY BY NICK BOORK

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September 20 – Galatians 5:13-26

For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁵But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! ¹⁶I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴And those *who are* Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

OKAY, HERE’S MY TEACHING COMMENTARY

In this portion of Scripture Paul moves from the doctrinal to the practical application of his message. This was Paul’s style. In many of his letter he leads his readers to soar into the heights of revelation knowledge teaching the divine mysteries and purposes of God in Christ then changes gears teaching believers what it means and how to practically apply it in our lives. He begins by saying that we have been called to liberty or freedom but we are not to use the liberty that we have from the law to fulfill sinful desires. This is where some Christians misinterpret what Paul taught us reasoning that since I am not under the law I can live however I want to but the reality is that if we have been born again we are to focus on serving others motivated by God’s love. He tells us that we are to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of our flesh which is easier said than done! I heard a story that illustrates the conflict that all Christians go through.

There once was a missionary that preached the gospel to the Indians on the great plains of the USA. The Tribal Chief heard the message and received Christ. He was gloriously born again. Everyone knew that he was now a worshipper and follower of Christ. Two of the young warriors came to him and asked him “Great Chief now that you have become a Christian what’s it like”.

The wise old Chief answered; "My sons it's like I have two dogs fighting within me." The young warriors asked him which one was winning and he answered the one I feed the most!

This is what's it's like walking the Christian life. After getting saved, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside us as children of God but we still have to deal with our un-renewed mind and fleshly nature even though it's power to control us is broken through Christ we all still go through the same temptations and struggles. We now have to feed our spirit by:

- Reading and meditating on the Word of God to renew our minds
- Spending time with God through prayer, praise and worship
- Repenting of sinful ways and habits, putting sin to death with the help of the Holy Spirit
- Attending and serving in a good local church receiving the ministry of the Body of Christ

Now we learn to yield to the Holy Spirit in not our sinful flesh. Where the Word says that the Spirit lusts against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit the word lust means desires. The Holy Spirit living in us desires us to abide in Christ and helps us to produce the fruit of the Spirit but the flesh seeks to satisfy its own corrupt desires and this is the conflict that we all experience every day as we walk with Jesus.

Paul outlines the works of the flesh in contrast to the fruit of the Holy Spirit producing the character of Christ in and through us. He says in verse 24 that those that belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with the affections and the lusts it wants to fulfill. In other words, we learn to say yes to Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives and no to the sinful desires of our flesh and in this way we crucify or put to death the sinful desires. This is a choice that we make every day! The Lord Jesus tells us in Luke 9:23 "If any man will come after me let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me." But God does not leave us powerless in the battle. He gives us the Holy Spirit empowering us to say no to sinful desires and lusts. This is why Paul concludes by saying that if we live in the Spirit let us also walk in the Spirit.

I will never forget the time that I was greatly tempted to go back and begin to smoke marijuana again. I had already been a Christian for about nine years and had served as a missionary in the Dominican Republic. My wife Yngris and I stopped at a Value World store to buy some clothes and when I was standing at the register to pay I looked down and there was a bag of marijuana on the floor. I quickly reached down, picked it up and put it into my pocket. When we got into our car I pulled it out. My wife said what's that? I told her I think it's some high-quality Colombian gold marijuana. I have to tell you, it brought back all the sensations of my past life as I smelled this bag of pot. She then asked me what are you going to do with it? The moment of truth had arrived and now I needed to make a decision to either yield to the Holy Spirit or go back to my old ways. As I hesitated I somehow found the strength and told her I'm going to throw it away! I got out of the car and threw it into a trash can. This was a decision I had to make but I believe God gave me grace through the Holy Spirit to say no. Let me tell you, that moment it was a very real temptation. I thank God for the power of the Holy Spirit to help us when we're tempted to

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overcome. I was delivered from marijuana back in 1982 shortly after I was saved and by God's grace I never returned to fulfill this fleshly temptation again. How about you? If you are dealing with temptations to go back to your old ways just asked the Lord to strengthen you and he will answer that prayer I guarantee it.

WHAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE?

- 1) We have been called to liberty from the law but that does not mean that we can live however we want to satisfy the evil desires of the flesh.
- 2) The Holy Spirit gives us the power to walk in the life of Christ with a new power and produces the fruit of the Spirit which glorifies God.
- 3) We still need to exercise our own wills when tempted.
- 4) The Holy Spirit will help us to crucify our old sinful nature and put sin to death in our lives.
- 5) As Christians we're free from trying to live by the Mosaic laws to please God but now we're called to walk in the Spirit and not live according to the flesh.

PRAYER TO APPLY THE WORD OF GOD TO OUR LIVES



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