

10. Walking in the Spirit



[Gal 5:15-26](#)

(15) But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

(16) But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

(17) For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

(18) But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not

under the law.

(19) Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,

(20) idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions,

(21) envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

(22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

(23) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

(24) And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

(25) If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

(26) Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Galatians 5:16

This I say then — Repeating in other words, and explaining the sentiment in [Gal 5:13](#), What I mean is this.”

Walk in the Spirit — *Greek*, “By (the rule of) the (Holy) Spirit.” Compare [Gal 5:16-18](#), [Gal 5:22](#), [Gal 5:25](#); [Gal 6:1-8](#), with [Rom 7:22](#); [Rom 8:11](#). The best way to keep tares out of a bushel is to fill it with wheat.

the flesh — the natural man, out of which flow the evils specified ([Gal 5:19-21](#)). The spirit and the flesh mutually exclude one another. It is promised, not that we should have no evil lusts, but that we should “not *fulfil*” them. If the spirit that is in us can be at ease under sin, it is not a spirit that comes from the Holy Spirit. The gentle dove trembles at the sight even of a hawk’s feather.

Galatians 5:17

For — the reason why walking by the Spirit will exclude fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, namely, their mutual contrariety.

the Spirit — not “lusteth,” but “tendeth (or some such word is to be supplied) against the flesh.”

so that ye cannot do the things that ye would — The Spirit strives against the flesh and its evil influence; the flesh against the Spirit and His good influence, *so that neither the one nor the other can be fully carried out into action*. “But” ([Gal 5:18](#)) where “the Spirit” prevails, the issue of the struggle no longer continues doubtful ([Rom 7:15-20](#)) [Bengel]. The *Greek* is, “that ye may not do the things that ye would.” “The flesh and Spirit are contrary one to the other,” *so that* you must distinguish what proceeds from the Spirit, and what from the flesh; and *you must not fulfil what you desire according to the carnal self*, but what the Spirit within you desires [Neander]. But the antithesis of [Gal 5:18](#) (“But,” etc.), where the conflict is *decided*, shows, I think, that here [Gal 5:17](#) contemplates the inability both for fully accomplishing the good we “would,” owing to the opposition of the *flesh*, and for doing the *evil* our flesh would desire, owing to the opposition of the *Spirit* in the awakened man (such as the Galatians are assumed to be), until we yield ourselves wholly by the Spirit to “walk by the Spirit” ([Gal 5:16](#), [Gal 5:18](#)).

Galatians 5:18

“If ye *are* led (give yourselves up to be led) *by* (*Greek*) the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” For ye are not working the works of the flesh ([Gal 5:16](#), [Gal 5:19-21](#)) which bring one “under the law” ([Rom 8:2](#), [Rom 8:14](#)). The “Spirit makes free from the law of sin and death” ([Gal 5:23](#)). The law is made for a fleshly man, and for the works of the flesh ([1Ti 1:9](#)), “not for a righteous man” ([Rom 6:14](#), [Rom 6:15](#)).

Galatians 5:19-23

Confirming [Gal 5:18](#), by showing the contrariety between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit.

manifest — The hidden *fleshly* principle betrays itself palpably by its works, so that these are not hard to discover, and leave no doubt that they come not from the Spirit.

which are these — *Greek*, “such as,” for instance.

Adultery — omitted in the oldest manuscripts.

lasciviousness — rather, “wantonness” petulance, capricious insolence; it may display itself in “lasciviousness,” but not necessarily or constantly so ([Mar 7:21](#), [Mar 7:22](#), where it is not associated with fleshly lusts) [Trench]. “Works” (in the plural) are attributed to the “flesh,” because they are divided, and often at variance with one another, and even when taken each one by itself, betray their fleshly origin. But the “*fruit* of the Spirit” ([Gal 5:23](#)) is singular, because, however manifold the results, they form one harmonious whole. The results of the flesh are not dignified by the name “fruit”; they are but *works* ([Eph 5:9](#), [Eph 5:11](#)). He enumerates those fleshly “works” (committed against our neighbor, against God, and against ourselves) to which the Galatians were most prone (the Celts have always been prone to disputations and internal strifes): and those manifestations of the *fruit* of the Spirit most needed by them ([Gal 5:13](#), [Gal 5:15](#)). This passage shows that “the flesh” does not mean merely *sensuality*, as opposed to *spirituality*: for “divisions” in the catalogue here do not flow from sensuality. The identification of “the natural (*Greek*, ‘*animal-souled*’) man,” with the “carnal” or *fleshly* man ([1Co 2:14](#)), shows that “the flesh” expresses *human nature as estranged from God*. Trench observes, as a proof of our fallen state, how much richer is every vocabulary in words for sins, than in those for graces. Paul enumerates *seventeen* “works of the flesh,” only *nine* manifestations of “the fruit of the Spirit” (compare [Eph 4:31](#)).

Galatians 5:20

witchcraft — sorcery; prevalent in Asia ([Act 19:19](#); compare [Rev 21:1-27](#)).

hatred — *Greek*, “hatreds.”

variance — *Greek*, “strife”; singular in the oldest manuscripts.

emulations — in the oldest manuscripts, singular - “emulation,” or rather, “jealousy”; for the sake of one’s own advantage. “Envyings” ([Gal 5:21](#)) are even without advantage to the person himself [Bengel].

wrath — *Greek*, plural, “passionate outbreaks” [Alford].

strife — rather as *Greek*, “factions,” “cabals”; derived from a *Greek* root, meaning “a worker for hire”: hence, *unworthy means for compassing ends, factious practices*.

seditions — “dissensions,” as to secular matters.

heresies — as to sacred things (see on [1Co 11:19](#)). Self-constituted *parties*; from a *Greek* root, to *choose*. A *schism* is a more recent split in a congregation from a difference of opinion. *Heresy* is a schism become inveterate [Augustine, *Con. Crescon. Don.*, 2, 7].

Galatians 5:21

tell ... before — namely, before the event.

I ... told you in time past — when I was with you.

you — who, though maintaining justification by the law, are careless about keeping the law ([Rom 2:21-23](#)).

not inherit ... kingdom of God — ([1Co 6:9](#), [1Co 6:10](#); [Eph 5:5](#)).

Galatians 5:22

love — the leader of the band of graces ([1Co 13:1-13](#)).

gentleness — *Greek*, “benignity,” conciliatory to others; whereas “goodness,” though ready to do good, has not such *suavity* of manner [Jerome]. Alford translates, “kindness.”

faith — “faithfulness”; opposed to “heresies” [Bengel]. Alford refers to [1Co 13:7](#), “Believeth all things”: *faith* in the widest sense, toward God and man. “Trustfulness” [Conybeare and Howson].

Galatians 5:23

temperance — The *Greek* root implies *self-restraint* as to one’s desires and lusts.

against such — not *persons*, but things, as in [Gal 5:21](#).

no law — confirming [Gal 5:18](#), “Not under the law” ([1Ti 1:9](#), [1Ti 1:10](#)). The law itself commands love ([Gal 5:14](#)); so far is it from being “against such.”

Galatians 5:24

The oldest manuscripts read, “They that are of Christ Jesus”; they that belong to Christ Jesus; being “led by (His) Spirit” ([Gal 5:18](#)).

have crucified the flesh — They nailed it to the cross once for all when they became Christ’s, on believing and being baptized ([Rom 6:3](#), [Rom 6:4](#)): they keep it *now* in a state of crucifixion ([Rom 6:6](#)): so that the Spirit can produce in them, comparatively uninterrupted by it, “the fruit of the Spirit” ([Gal 5:22](#)). “Man, by faith, is dead to the former standing point of a sinful life, and rises to a new life ([Gal 5:25](#)) of communion with Christ ([Col 3:3](#)). The act by which *they have crucified the flesh with its lust*, is already accomplished ideally in principle. But the practice, or outward conformation of the life, must harmonize with the tendency given to the inward life” ([Gal 5:25](#)) [Neander]. We are to be executioners, dealing cruelly with the body of sin, which has caused the acting of all cruelties on Christ’s body.

with the affections — Translate, “with its passions.” Thus they are dead to the law’s condemning power, which is only for the fleshly, and their lusts ([Gal 5:23](#)).

Galatians 5:25

in ... in — rather, as *Greek*, “If we live (see on [Gal 5:24](#)) BY the Spirit, let us also walk ([Gal 5:16](#); [Gal 6:16](#)) BY the Spirit.” Let our life in practice correspond to the ideal inner principle of our spiritual life, namely, our standing by faith as dead to, and severed from, sin, and the condemnation of the law. “Life by (or ‘in’) the Spirit” is not an occasional influence of the Spirit, but an abiding state, wherein we are continually alive, though sometimes sleeping and inactive.

Galatians 5:26

Greek, “Let us not BECOME.” While not asserting that the Galatians are “*vainglorious*” now, he says they are liable to *become* so.

provoking one another — an effect of “vaingloriousness” on the *stronger*: as “envying” is its effect on the *weaker*. A danger common both to the orthodox and Judaizing Galatians.

Rom 7:17-25

- (17) So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.
- (18) For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.
- (19) For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.
- (20) Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.
- (21) So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.
- (22) For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,
- (23) but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.
- (24) Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
- (25) Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

Rom 8:1-7

- (1) There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- (2) For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.
- (3) For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,
- (4) in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
- (5) For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.
- (6) For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.
- (7) For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.