

FREEDOM

(For FREEDOM Christ has set us free! Gal 5:1)

“Gospel Character1” Galatians 5:16-25

In the first half of chapter 5, we learned that Christian freedom gives us a whole new motivation for living. In normal religion, the motivation for morality is fear and/or pride. In gospel Christianity, the motivation is a heart captivated by Christ's love (5:6, 14). In this passage we learn how to grow in character through this new dynamic of love.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS A BATTLE:

- 1) Our flesh (sinful nature) was there, ruling alone and unopposed, before we were Christians. We are sinners by nature and by choice. (Rom3:23; Eph2:3; Rom5:12-21)
- 2) The Spirit entered our lives supernaturally when we first became Christians and has begun a work of whole life transformation. (John14:16-17, 16:7-15; 1Cor3:16)
- 3) The battle is between desires of the Spirit and the flesh. At any point in our life we will “live by” one, and “not gratify” the other. vv16, 24; Rom7:22-23; Eph4:22-24 “old self” vs. “new self”.

THE NATURE OF THIS BATTLE:

- 1) The biggest problem with our flesh is not that we desire bad things, but over-desire good things that become our self-righteousness. v16 & v24 Desires = Gr. “epithumia” means an over-desire, an inordinate desire, an all-controlling drive and longing. (Eph.2:3, 4:22; 1 Pet.2:11, 4:2; 1 John 2:16; James 1:14)
- 2) The Holy Spirit desires for us to see, savor and show the beauty and glory of who Christ is and what He has done to give us a perfect righteousness. V17 “the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh” John16:14; Eph5:18; Rom1:16-17
- 3) Anything that becomes more beautiful to your imagination and more attractive and desirable to your heart than Christ is an over-desire that will inevitably produce the works of the flesh. v16 “Walk by the Spirit” vs. “not gratify the desires of the flesh” v18 “Led by the Spirit” vs. “not under law” v24 “Those who belong to Christ Jesus” vs. “Crucified the flesh...”

THE WORKS OF THE FLESH (SINFUL NATURE): Vv19-21

- ✓ Sexual immorality – “porneia” – all illicit sexual activity including (but not limited to) adultery, premarital sex, homosexuality, bestiality, incest, and prostitution.
- ✓ Impurity – “akatharsia” – unclean sexual motives, language, innuendoes and jokes with double sexual meaning.
- ✓ Sensuality – “aselgia” – Open & excessive indulgence in sexual sins. The person has no sense of shame or restraint. Product of 1st two.

desert breeze community church

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- ✓ Idolatry – “eidololatria” – anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God. Counterfeit gods.
- ✓ Sorcery – “pharmakeia”— counterfeiting the works of the Spirit. through the use of mood or mind altering drugs along with witchcraft & occult practices.
- ✓ Enmity (Hatred) – “echthrai” – hostility, a bitter or adversarial attitude.
- ✓ Jealousy – “zelos” – the zeal & energy that comes from a hungry ego.
- ✓ Rivalries – “eritheia” – competitiveness, a self-seeking.
- ✓ Envy – “phthonoi” – coveting, a desire for what others have.
- ✓ Strife (Discord) – “eris” – argumentative, “fight-picking” behavior.
- ✓ Fits of anger – “thumoi” – outbursts of anger.
- ✓ Dissensions – “dichostaiia” – strong disagreements and quarrels
- ✓ Divisions – “aireseis” – permanent parties, warring factions & cliques.
- ✓ Drunkenness – “methai” – excessive use of wine and strong drink.
- ✓ Orgies – “komi” – drunken, carousing parties often filled with sexual promiscuity.
- ✓ And things like these – etc. – this list is by no means complete.

THE KEY TO WINNING THE BATTLE: vv24-25

- 1) Which works of the flesh (sinful nature) do you see in your life?
- 2) What are the over-desires that are at the root of these attitudes and actions?
- 3) How will you preach the Gospel of grace and acceptance to yourself to undermine these over-desires?

We must worship Christ, with the help of the Holy Spirit, adoring Him until our hearts find Him more beautiful than the object (over-desires) we feel we can't live without.

Growing Notes

- 1) What is character? How is character (fruit) different from charisma (gifts)? Why do you think character change is so hard? If you could change one character trait about yourself what would it be?
- 2) Read Galatians 5:16-25. What stands out to you? What is the difference between character change motivated by fear and/or pride vs. a heart captivated by Christ's love (5:6, 14, 24)? Why is spiritual growth a battle? What is the nature of the battle?
- 3) Review the list of the works of the flesh. What is the key to winning this battle (vv24-25)? Answer the three questions at the end of the sermon notes. Pray that you learn to worship Christ, with the help of the Holy Spirit, adoring Him until your heart finds Him more beautiful than the object (over-desires) you feel you can't live without.