

Galatians 5:16-26

Christian Standard Bible (CSB)

1 ¹⁶ I say then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not
 2 carry out the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is
 3 against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the
 4 flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don't do
 5 what you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not
 6 under the law.

7 ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality,
 8 moral impurity, promiscuity, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatreds,
 9 strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions,
 10 dissensions, factions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, carousing, and
 11 anything similar. I am warning you about these things—as I
 12 warned you before—that those who practice such things will
 13 not inherit the kingdom of God.

14 ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience,
 15 kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-
 16 control. The law is not against such things. ²⁴ Now those who
 17 belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its
 18 passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also
 19 keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited,
 20 provoking one another, envying one another.

Observation (What does it say?):

Consider the observation questions on the back of this page. What do you notice in this passage?

- What descriptions does Paul use to describe our relationship with the Holy Spirit?
- Looking at the list related to the flesh (v. 19-21), is there an order to the list? Or are there groups of items? Or is the list more or less a random sequence?
- Likewise for the list related to the Spirit (v. 22-23) – is there a sequence or an priority or any other kind of arrangement you see?
- What other observations do you make?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

After observing the passage:

- What connection might there be between the different ways Paul described our relationship with the Spirit
- If you see some order or groupings in the lists for the flesh and for the Spirit, how does that affect your understanding of the passage?
- Do you think either of the lists is exhaustive? Did Paul mention every possible “work of the flesh” or “fruit of the Spirit”?
- What questions do you have about the passage?

Application (What does it mean for me?):

- What parts of this passage fit your current life situation?
- What parts seem unrelated to your circumstances?
- How might this passage affect your understanding of who God is and what He is doing?
- How would this passage affect counsel you might give to a person struggling with sin?

Additional questions for thought and discussion:

- What does “crucified the flesh” (v. 24) mean in practical terms? “Crucified” sounds quite final - how do we explain the continuing existence of sin in our lives?
- Why does Paul go back to a challenge about conceit and envy (v. 26) after describing the fruit of the Spirit?
- What is the significance of the warning at the end of verse 21 about not inheriting the kingdom of God? Does that inheritance depend on our behavior (a “law”) after all? This is the only mention of the kingdom in Paul’s letter – why insert it here?

Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

Observation (What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer’s thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose (“in order that...”)?
- Are there conclusions (“Therefore...”)?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good “headline” for the passage?

Interpretation (What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer’s thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

Application (What does it mean for me?)

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

**Read nothing into the Scriptures,
but draw everything from them,
and suffer nothing to remain
hidden that is really in them.
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)**