

## Paul's Letter to the Galatians

Notes by Doug Hamilton

### The Fruit-Bearing Christian (Galatians 5:13-26)

Galatians 5:13-15 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. <sup>14</sup> For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the *statement*, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." <sup>15</sup> But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

- It has often been said that the Book of Galatians is a smaller version of the Book of Romans. Paul dealt with the theology of grace of Christ over the Law of Moses in the first two-thirds of Romans, then in the latter third the ethical issues of living the faith. This is the section of the letter that Paul moves from being theological to ethical.
- Apparently some of the Galatians were not treating others in the church in a respective manner. Even though they had been freed from the Law of Moses, they were still under the timeless principle of "loving thy neighbor". One might say it was of the Law since it came through the mouth of Moses in Leviticus 19:18, but it was codified into principle when Jesus outlined the entire Law under two points, loving the LORD thy God and loving thy neighbor (MT 22:37). It was the latter that James referred to as the "*royal law according to the scripture*" upon which all of our personal relationships adhere.
- That was the point that Paul was trying to prove in the ethical section of Romans. *Romans 13:8-10 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.* <sup>9</sup> For this, "*YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET,*" and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "*YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.*" <sup>10</sup> Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.
- They could have all the theology, Bible studies, memory work and reference books that their library could hold, but until they start loving one another the way God intended, it is a dead and worldly religion. *John 13:35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

Galatians 5:16-18 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. <sup>17</sup> For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. <sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

- Paul is now setting up an argument that will make the decision obvious to the readers. There are two lives that the Christians must choose between, the fleshly and the spiritual. *1 Corinthians 3:1-3 "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup> I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, <sup>3</sup> for you are still fleshly..."* Depending on how we choose will determine where we end up in the end.
- It must be noted that walking "by the Spirit" is not some existential force that guides the Christian into all righteousness. Rather it is a clear path of direction as confirmed by the Holy Scripture. It is the Christian that must make the decision to walk in the flesh or walk by the Spirit. *Ephesians 2:3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.* There is a denominational mindset in the world that teaches that

## Paul's Letter to the Galatians

Notes by Doug Hamilton

the Holy Spirit is some mysterious force that guides people in and apart from God's word. If it were not for the Spirit-backed inspired words of the Apostles as written in the Bible, we would not even know how the manner of life that God has called us to live.

- *Romans 8:5-6* “For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace...”

Galatians 5:19-21 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,<sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,<sup>21</sup> envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

- Paul lists a series of sins of the flesh that war against us. Some are sin that war against God, some against others around us and the remaining primarily against ourselves. A brief look at each will better clarify application.
  - Immorality: This is sexual immorality of fornication. It is inclusive to sex before marriage, adultery and general pornography.
  - Impurity: This is to the level of homosexuality and bestiality, that which can eliminate their presence from God.
  - Sensuality: This describes the attitude of wantonness and willingness of sinful living. It is a readiness or willingness for sin.
  - Idolatry: It is the sin of making material things to take the place of the one true God.
  - Sorcery: Ancient scholar William Barclay says the word “*literally means the use of drugs*”. The ancient sorcerers of the day would often employ the use of drugs to better trick their recipients into the mysterious world of mysticism.
  - Enmities: David Lipscomb referred to this as having the qualities which make enemies. It is a private hatred that can easily slide into strife.
  - Strife: This is engaged enmity. The word originally meant to *strive for prizes* like an athlete would strive for the championship. Only the prize here is to make it hard on our fellow man.
  - Jealousy: This comes from the word for *zealous* and originally had a positive meaning. It is when a person deeply and wrongly desires to have what another does.
  - Outbursts of Anger: This is an anger that fires up quickly and dies out.
  - Disputes: This word comes from one whom canvasses for political office with the perspective of doing it for what they can personally benefit from.
  - Dissensions: This is strife motivated by an individual and taken to a group level.
  - Factions: This refers to those of strife that group up in dissension and move to the offensive. It comes from the word *heresy*.
  - Envying: This is jealousy to a level that one seeks to take away that which another has.
  - Drunkenness: The practice of using alcohol to seek the pleasure of intoxication. Both the Greeks and Christians would have condemned it in the culture.

## Paul's Letter to the Galatians

Notes by Doug Hamilton

- Carousing: This is the boisterous revelry that degenerates into licentiousness. It often describes a group activity.
- Similar things: Just in case there are some behaviors that look like the above, they also should be condemned.
- Those who practice these things are not going to inherit the kingdom of God. What determines the practice? It is that which is not repented of when coming into the knowledge that it is evil. Not practicing the putting away of these things indicates a practice of the same.
- Paul would go on to say that the deeds of the flesh are to be crucified as a result of being submissive to the crucifixion of Jesus. *Galatians 5:24-26 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.* <sup>25</sup> *If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.* <sup>26</sup> *Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.* When we are fighting the sins of the flesh, the path of the Spirit will become more obvious and flourish.

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

- Jesus said in *Matthew 7:16* “*You will know them by their fruits...*” He was talking about the followers of God will have certain fruit generated in their lives that will make it obvious. Good trees must bring forth good fruit and bad trees must bring forth bad fruit. In the case of what Paul was referring to, there were nine type of fruit that made up the fruit of the Spirit.
  - Love: This is a love that is best described as being willing to lay down your life for another. Jesus confirmed this in John 15:13 would be willing “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.” When one knows that you would be willing to live for them, then they know you would be willing to die for them. There is no greater love than that.
  - Joy: This is not a joy that can be found in earthly things, but in the foundation of God and the spiritual things thereof.
  - Peace: This is the result of freedom from everything that might hinder a relationship with God. *When peace like a river attendeth my way, and sorrows like sea billows roll. Whatever my lot, Though hast taught me to say, It is well, It is well with my soul.*
  - Patience: This is a patience that allows us to deal with our shortcomings and the shortcomings of others. By having this we can press on to other areas of maturity.
  - Kindness: This is a moral goodness that seeks to spread to others.
  - Goodness: This is an uprightness of heart in the individual. They seek to have virtue at every decision they face.
  - Faithfulness: The person with this quality is dependable in crisis and viewed as reliable in the turmoil of life.
  - Gentleness: This is a word that has many meanings. Primarily it means to be submissive to God in areas of being teachable and in consideration of others.
  - Self-control: This is the quality of maturity of moving from having to be disciplined to being able to discipline oneself. As Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 9:27 *but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached*

## Paul's Letter to the Galatians

Notes by Doug Hamilton

*to others, I myself will not be disqualified.* Just as a champion athlete has reached the level of self-discipline, so also is this quality to be in the life of the Christian.

### Three Points to be Remembered.

#### 1. Fruit of the Spirit is first planted by God at conversion.

- 1 Peter 1:22-23 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,<sup>23</sup> for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God.
- 1 John 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.
- Romans 7:4 "...so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God."

#### 2. Fruit of the Spirit is grown over time, not overnight.

- Luke 13:6-9 And He *began* telling this parable: "A man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and did not find any."<sup>7</sup> "And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?'"<sup>8</sup> "And he answered and said to him, 'Let it alone, sir, for this year too, until I dig around it and put in fertilizer;<sup>9</sup> and if it bears fruit next year, *fine*; but if not, cut it down.'" "
- Hebrews 12:11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.
- Ephesians 5:8-10 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light<sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of the Light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth),<sup>10</sup> trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

#### 3. Fruit of the Spirit will feed those around us.

- Matthew 5:16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.
- Matthew 13:23 "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."
- Philippians 1:9-11 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,<sup>10</sup> so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;<sup>11</sup> having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.