

Galatians
“Living Free”
Main Teaching: 1:10-6:10
C. 5:1-6:10 Responded Grace
2. 5:13-26 Power of performance

5:22-26
“The Secret of Life”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 22-23 Total make over

III. Vs. 24-26 Dead men don't walk

I. Intro.

For 11 years Merhan Nasserri (*who had been expelled from his native country of Iran*) was a man without a country. He was allowed to live in Terminal 1 of the Paris airport in 1988. There he stayed for 11 years, writing in a diary, living off of handouts from airport employees, cleaning up in the airport bathroom. Finally, on September 1999 the situation changed as French authorities gave Nasserri an international travel card and a French residency permit. Suddenly he was free to go anywhere he wanted. But to their surprise when airport officials handed him his walking papers, he simply smiled, tucked the documents in his folder, and resumed writing in his diary. You see he was afraid to leave the place that had been his home for 11 years. Can you imagine a more unnatural home than an airport? Friends when we come to Christ, we have a move to make that can be as frightening as the move Nasserri had to make from the airport. We are beckoned to leave our home of the ways of this fallen world to our new home: the ways of the kingdom of God.

II. Vs. 22-23 Total make over

Vs.22 Looking at the list of 17 works of the flesh realizing that it is not an exhaustive list causes a person to feel overwhelmed at the reality of battling our old nature. The Holy Spirit is big enough and good enough to change you from the 17 works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. Love always triumphs over the flesh. We cannot defeat the work of the flesh with work empowered by the flesh; it can only be defeated by the Fruit of the Spirit! Paul is careful to

call this fruit because fruit has 5 chief characteristics:

- 1 It is produced by abiding not by working
- 2 It is fragile
- 3 It reproduces itself
- 4 It is attractive
- 5 It nourishes

It is one thing to overcome the flesh and *not do* evil things, but quite something else *to do* good things. The legalist may try to boast that they are not guilty of adultery or murder but can they boast in the Spirit that they are guilty of the fruit of the Spirit? A machine in a factory *works*, and turns out a product, but it could never manufacture fruit. Paul begins with *love* because all of the other fruit is really an outgrowth of love.

- A. These first three qualities express the Godward aspect of the Christian life: *Love, Joy and peace*
- B. The next three express the manward aspect of the Christian life: *long-suffering, gentleness, and goodness.*
- C. The final three qualities are selfward: *faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

When Paul described the life lived after the flesh he used the plural form calling it the works of the flesh; but here he uses the singular fruit. The Holy Spirit has only one work to do in all of us, LOVE! No Christian can claim, “*Well the Holy Spirit didn’t give me this gift.*” The empowering, indwelling Holy Spirit can change each and every believer no matter what 17 works of the flesh afflict them. If you want to know what the Holy Spirit’s fruit of love looks like in action you can best see it at work in these 8 characteristics. There are four distinct words in the Greek for love:

- i. Eros: Describes a romantic, passionate love.
- ii. Philia: Describes the love we have for those near and dear to us as in family and friends.
- iii. Storge: Describes a love that shows its self in affection and care.
- iv. Agape: Describes a different kind of love that is more of a decision than a spontaneous action.

Agape chooses to love the undeserving, thus its action has to do with the mind and not just the emotions. It is an “*unconquerable benevolence*” no matter what a person may do to us by way of insult, injury or humiliation we will never seek anything else but their highest good. Barclay described it as, “*the deliberate effort which— (only with the help*

of God) – *we never to seek anything but the best even for those who seek the worst for us.*” When you have been badly treated, and you think of returning evil for evil, remember, “*The fruit of the Spirit is love.*” Do not imitate it evil for evil, imitate Christ.

Godward aspect of the Christian life

1. **Joy:** The Greek word is not the joy that comes from earthly things, or from triumphing over someone else in competition. It is a joy whose foundation is God. Spurgeon wrote: “*This joy does not come from what a person has, but from what they are; not from where they are, but from whose they are; not from what they enjoy, but from what was suffered for them by their Lord.*” One of the greatest marketing strategies ever employed is to position hell as the place where the fun is and the kingdom of God as the place of gloom and misery. This is a joy that can abide and remain, even when circumstances seem terrible. It is this joy that Paul knew in Acts 16:25 that caused him to sing when he was beaten and chained in a dark dungeon!
2. **Peace:** The Greek word for peace does not just mean freedom from trouble it reaches into the positive and claims everything for our highest good. It means tranquility of heart which comes from the consciousness that we are in the hands of God. The early Christians loved these two characteristics of love so much that the two most popular Christian names were Cara “Joy” and Irene and “Peace”. This peace is peace with God and with people, filled with blessing and goodness – not just the absence of fighting.

Manward aspect of the Christian life

3. **Longsuffering:** Longsuffering is that quality which enables a person to bear adversity, injury, reproach, and makes them patient to wait for the improvement of those who have done him wrong. Luther said, “*When the devil finds that he cannot overcome certain persons by force he tries to overcome them in the long run.*” To be longsuffering means that you can have love, joy, and peace even over a period of time when people and events annoy you.
4. **Kindness:** This is the same kind of kindness by which God acts towards humanity. The Christian is to treat people in the same manner in which God has treated them. Kindness is a question of disposition whereas goodness is a question of action in words and deeds.

5. **Goodness**: These two words are closely connected. About the only difference is that goodness also has with it the idea of generosity.

Selfward aspect of the Christian life

6. **Faithfulness**: The idea behind this word is that the Spirit of God works in us faithfulness both to God and to people. “*It is the characteristic of the man who is reliable.*” The ability to serve God faithfully through the years and through the temptations of life is something that can only be achieved by the Spirit.
7. **Gentleness**: The word has the idea of being teachable, not having a superior attitude, not demanding one’s rights. It is the quality of a person who is angry at the right time and over the right things and never at the wrong time and over the wrong things. In our society what is prized is self-assertiveness but what God values in the heart is gentleness.
8. **Self-control**: The world knows of self-control and self-sacrifice, but almost always for a selfish reason. The self-discipline and denial of the flesh is only for themselves, but the self-control of the Spirit will also work on behalf of others.

Paul concludes this list with a double truth, “*Against such there is no law*”. Love with these characteristics is what lawmakers would desire to legislate if they could. It is possible for the old nature to *counterfeit* some of the fruit of the Spirit, but the flesh can never *produce* the fruit of the Spirit. **The difference is**: When the Spirit produces fruit, God gets the glory. When the flesh is at work, the person is inwardly proud of himself and is pleased when others compliment him. The fruit is produced *to be eaten*, not to be admired and put on display. People around us are starving for love, joy, peace, and all the other graces of the Spirit. We do not bear fruit for our own consumption; we bear fruit that others might be fed and helped, and that Christ might be glorified.

III. Vs. 24-26 Dead men don’t walk

Vs. 24 Notice that Paul says here that those who are in Christ “HAVE” crucified the flesh. He didn’t say “SHOULD”, or “BETTER HAVE” but rather he describes it as having already taken place and something therefore we need only be

reminded of that truth. Friends, the flesh no longer has dominion over us, it's been crucified, so next time it wants to act like a "zombie" walking around getting you in trouble you only need to remember that in Christ "*dead men don't walk.*" Paul choose to use the word "cross" instead of just saying kill it because the cross reminds us that this is what Jesus did with our sin and it is what we are to do if we wish to follow Him. It reminds us that doing so is painful but we have to take direct action against the flesh. The verb is in the active voice and points rather to what the believer has himself done and must continue to regard as being done. "*When Christ came in the flesh, we crucified him; when he comes into our hearts, he crucifies us.*"

Vs. 25 The Greek words for walk here is different than the word for walk in verse 16. Here the word means "*to walk in line with*". The idea is, "*let the Holy Spirit continually direct your steps.*"

Vs. 26 Paul ends this chapter with the need for each believer to examine their own hearts. The problems are in us, and need to be dealt with by the Spirit of God. Augustine used to often pray, "*Lord, deliver me from that evil man, myself.*" All we must do is yield to the Spirit of God, and begin to truly walk in the Spirit.