

Walking in the Spirit

Key Verse: *“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”*
—Galatians 5:25

Selected Scripture:
Galatians 5:16-26

ONE GREAT CHALLENGE

for God’s children is to consistently keep our fleshly appetites, ambitions or desires in subjection to the divine will. High-mindedness may be caused by a desire to be recognized by others among our fellow creatures, to be well thought of, to

receive the empty honors of the earth, to have wealth, influence, or to be held in esteem, either by the world or even our brethren. These are characteristics which are part and parcel of our fallen nature, and must be striven against by hearkening unto God’s Word. “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”—Gal. 5:16

Additionally, as consecrated believers, if our spirit is such that we harbor feelings of animosity towards others, then we must wage an aggressive warfare against such a disposition lest it consume us. The Heavenly Father is very merciful, and even those who have opposed the followers of Christ prior to devoting themselves to godliness and consecrated living might subsequently repent of their wrongdoing and become acceptable to God. Saul of Tarsus, who became a sincere follower of Christ following his Damascus Road experience, was an example of such transformational conduct. What a marvelous provision God has made for all who truly desire to serve him in spirit and in truth.

—Acts 9:1-19; John 4:24

The Apostle Paul speaks to us concerning this battle of the flesh against the Spirit: “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.”—Gal. 5:17,18

The works of the flesh which Satan encourages are contrary to the path that those begotten of the Holy Spirit should follow. Paul enumerates in our lesson some specific vices which, although not an exhaustive listing, illustrate various sensual, religious, social and interpersonal sins as examples of conduct that are inconsistent with righteousness. If persisted in without repentance, such practices would debar us from sharing in the hope of being a member of the body of Christ. On the contrary, if the “fruit of the Spirit” is properly cultivated in its many manifestations of love in our character including joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, meekness, faith and self-control, that will give evidence that we are voluntarily crucifying the tendencies of the fallen human nature and are walking in newness of life.—vss. 19-24

Our Key Verse affirms that as New Creatures in Christ, if we abide in him, we will receive the strength to be more than conquerors and ultimately, be united in glory with our beloved Savior. We thus see that the object of our having received the Gospel message is not merely to give us an intellectual knowledge of God’s plan, but to assist us in the transformation process so that through the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, we may develop a Christlike character. Let us indeed give diligence to these matters so that we can demonstrate our love for God, his righteous principles, and ultimately share in the work of reconciling mankind to the Heavenly Father and restoring them to the perfection that was lost in Eden. ■