

Walk in the Spirit

Key Verse: *“This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”*
—Galatians 5:16

Selected Scripture:
Galatians 5:16-26

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO GALATIA was written to combat the influence of Judaizing teachers who sought to undermine the faith of believers by insisting their relationship with God also required them to follow the Law of Moses. Our Key Verse, however, asserts that the only way to keep human aims, ambitions and desires under control is by submitting to the divine influence of God's Word as a result of spirit begetting.

However, even with consecrated believers, there may be times, because of our inherited sinful nature, we might harbor feelings of animosity concerning others who act towards us in ways that irritate our flesh. Such propensities must be overcome if we are to share in restoring fallen mankind to perfection during God's kingdom. “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.”—vss. 17,18

In a sober analysis as to the difficulty in overcoming such fallen traits, Paul enumerates a number of evil works which may come to the forefront, and he concludes this listing by indicating that those who habitually manifest such qualities will not obtain a heavenly inheritance in God's kingdom. (vss. 19-21,24-26) By contrast, the fruits

of the Spirit are also delineated, which the apostle says include “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” (vss. 22,23) These tend to make believers more agreeable one to another, as well as reflect the transforming effect of Christlikeness upon those who have embarked upon the narrow way.

The need for Christians to manifest fruitage in their lives is underscored elsewhere as well. Here is another listing. “Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity [love]. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—II Pet. 1:5-8

We also read, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) It was for this very purpose that the Lord became flesh. Although in his love, God sent Jesus to die for the human race, thus providing a way of escape from death, a mere mental assent to this fact will not qualify us to be participants in the great work of helping to restore mankind to Edenic perfection when the kingdom is established. The Jews trusted in Moses and accepted the letter of his writings, but if they had seen the spirit, or deeper meaning of his words, they would have accepted Christ.—John 5:46,47

Loving obedience to godly principles espoused by our Lord during his ministry is foundational to righteousness. “God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24) All must come to worship God “in spirit and in truth” rather than merely performing lip service. What a holy standard to emulate!—John 4:24 ■