

GALATIANS 5:16-25 – Walking in the Spirit

SETUP

When you become a Christian, you receive the call to a DIFFERENT WAY of living (Gal 5:25, 2 Cor 5:7, 10:3, Rom 12:2).

- * But this new way doesn't always come NATURALLY to us.
 - * You are living under a TENSION (v17), TUGGED in two OPPOSITE directions, a tussle between FLESH & SPIRIT.
- *How would you describe this 'different way of living?' Why doesn't it come particularly naturally to us?*
- *Do you find yourself conflicted? In what ways does the 'flesh' tug at you? What does the flesh 'crave?' How does the Spirit 'guide?'*

THE TWO COMBATANTS

1. FLESH: Our OLD, UNRENEWED, CARNAL nature.
 - * The bits you & God are STILL WORKING ON.
 2. SPIRIT: Inside every born-again believer is a wonderful, complex, intimate FELLOWSHIP = Our spirit INDWELT BY the Holy Spirit.
- *How would you explain the 'flesh?' What are its characteristics? What does the Bible have to say about what flesh does?*
- *"Inside every born-again believer is a wonderful, complex, intimate fellowship: our spirit indwelt by, working with, led by the Holy Spirit. That produces an entirely different set of passions & duly pulls us in completely the opposite direction." Describe the nature of that new relationship / fellowship. How is it mysterious? What does it look like when it's working at its best?*

5 EXAMPLES OF THE TENSION

- a) You know the right way to RESPOND, but your INSECURITIES just shout so loud, eventually you just GIVE IN.
- b) You know, as a Christian you're called to walk in LOVE & yet you're ANGRY and so you finally LASH OUT.
- c) You know, as a Christian, you've been saved by grace, supposed to LIVE by grace and be RULED by grace & yet somehow you just can't stop the URGE to judge & criticise.
- d) You know the PROMISES of God, but in the PRESSURE of the moment, it just all seems too much & any JOY is replaced by gloom & despondency & any PEACE is strangled by stress & anxiety.

e) You can see the DREAM, but you're IMPATIENT. Surely we can get there QUICKER, if we just give God a little HELPING HAND.

→ *Do you struggle with any of those? How does it usually play itself out? Can you give any other examples of this tension in action?*

WHAT ADVICE DOES PAUL GIVE TO HELP US WIN A LITTLE MORE OFTEN?

1. Make a stake-in-the-ground decision to FULLY SURRENDER

- * v16: The word 'let' implies a CHOICE & the word 'guide' asks, Who is going to be given CONTROL? And the correct answer, of course, is THE HOLY SPIRIT.
 - * JM: "I HAD the Holy Spirit, but He didn't have ALL of ME."
 - * Struggle is INEVITABLE until we FULLY surrender.
- *Have you made that stake-in-the-ground decision? What happened when you did? What is required to change as you do? To what extent do you have to continually surrender?*
- *Discuss that Joyce Meyer quote. What does it mean to say 'He has all of me?' Does He? What do you still need to surrender?*

2. Your flesh must be CRUCIFIED over & over again.

- * The Danger: We inadvertently FEED the FLESH by continually GIVING IN & letting it WIN.
 - * When you hear the flesh SCREAMING at you, simply IGNORE it. If you STARVE it, over time it will grow WEAKER, until you have it TRAINED.
- *"If you live as one flesh-ruled or flesh-led, the devil will have a field-day. He just whispers in ear, pokes your flesh & your flesh jumps up like playful puppy. If that's you, you'll find yourself tossed to & fro by every fear, failure, criticism, offence or delay." Discuss!*
- *How do you 'ignore' or 'starve' the flesh? Why does that tend to be easier said than done? What could you actively do when it is really hard? As a rule, if you're honest, would you say you encourage or crucify your flesh?*

3. FEED your SPIRITUAL life any & every way you can.

- a) Get DEEPLY into the WORD so the WORD can get DEEPLY into YOU (Col 3:16).
 - b) FIX your MIND on THINGS ABOVE (Col 3:1-2).
 - c) DIALOGUE with the HOLY SPIRIT (Rom 8:5-6).
- *How are you doing with each of those? Anything else can you do to feed your spiritual life? Anything in particular you can sense the Lord is prompting you to do or change in this regard?*