Holy Living in the Spirit
Gal 5:18-6:10
SS Lesson for 02/26/2017

Devotional Scripture: Rom 8:5-17

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Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson reveals the elements of refusing the works of the flesh and how we can maintain Holy Living in the Spirit. The study's aim is to learn to walk in the Spirit each day of our lives. The study's application is to daily refuse to do the deeds of the flesh and to obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Key Verse: Gal 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

5:16. The answer to the abuses described in the previous verse is to live by the Spirit. The verb peripateite is a present imperative and is literally translated, “keep on walking.” As a believer walks through life he should depend on the indwelling Holy Spirit for guidance and power. But the Spirit does not operate automatically in a believer’s heart. He waits to be depended on. When a Christian does yield to the Spirit’s control, the promise is that he will not in anywise (the double negative ou mê is emphatic) gratify (telešēte, “complete, fulfill” in outward action) the desires of the sinful nature. Thus, while no believer will ever be entirely free in this life from the evil desires that stem from his fallen human nature, he need not capitulate to them, but may experience victory by the Spirit’s help.

5:17. Paul next explained the need for a life that is controlled and energized by the Spirit. The explanation is found in the fact that each Christian has two natures, a sinful nature received at birth, inherited from fallen Adam, and a new nature received at regeneration when said Christian became a participant in the divine nature (cf. 2 Peter 1:4). Both natures have desires, the one for evil and the other for holiness. Thus they are in conflict with each other, and the result can be that they keep a believer from doing what he otherwise would. In other words the Holy Spirit blocks, when He is allowed to do so, the evil cravings of the flesh. (Some hold the view that each believer is a new person, still possessing the fallen human nature, but not having a new nature. Others prefer to define “nature” as capacity, the old nature being that capacity to serve sin and self and the new nature the capacity to serve God and righteousness.)

5:18. In summary, Paul emphasized that a godly life is not lived under the rules of the Law but is a life led by the Spirit. It was important for the Galatians to know that just as justification is not possible by works so sanctification cannot be achieved by human effort. This of course does not mean that a Christian is totally passive in either case for the response of faith is necessary—faith in Christ to save and in the Holy Spirit to sanctify. Since a Christian has the same sinful nature he possessed before salvation, he may fall prey to the sins that nature produces if he does not live by means of the Spirit.

5:19. The apostle declared that the sins of the flesh are obvious, meaning either, as some suggest, that they are public and cannot be hidden, or better, since some are private sins, that they originate with the sinful nature and not with the new nature indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The listed sins are commonly seen to fall into four categories. First, three sexual sins are mentioned. Sexual immorality (porneia) is often translated “fornication.” From this word comes the term “pornography.” Porneia refers to any and all forms of illicit sexual relationships. Impurity (akatharsia) is a broad term referring to moral uncleanness in thought, word, and deed (cf. Eph. 5:3-4). Debauchery (aselgeia) connotes an open, shameless, brazen display of these evils (cf. 2 Cor. 12:21 where the same words occur; aselgeia is included in Rom. 13:13).

5:20. Following the sexual sins, Paul cited two religious sins. Idolatry involved the worship of pagan gods by bowing to idols, and because of its mention just after the listing of sexual sins it probably includes the male and female prostitution so often a part of heathen religion. Witchcraft is the translation of the Greek word pharmakeia from which the term “pharmacy” comes. In ancient times the worship of evil powers was accompanied by the use of drugs to create trances. This vice will also be prominent in the Tribulation period (cf. Rev. 9:21; 18:23). Eight societal evils are then listed (the last one in Gal. 5:21). Hatred (echthrai) is in the plural form, denoting primarily a feeling of enmity between groups. Discord (eris) is the natural result of “hatred” and no doubt a problem in the Galatian church. Jealousy (zēlos) refers not to the godly form but to the sinful and self-centered type. (These two words, eris and zelos, are also listed in Rom. 13:13.) Fits of rage (thymoi) or outbursts of temper, often come as a final eruption of smoldering jealousy. Selfish ambition (erithetai) is a self-aggrandizing attitude which shows itself in working to get ahead at
other’s expense (cf. Phil. 2:3). Dissensions (dichostasias) and factions (haireseis) describe what happens when people quarrel over issues or personalities, causing hurtful divisions.

5:21. Envy (phthonoi) is an evil feeling, a wrongful desire to possess what belongs to someone else. Thus the sinful nature is seen to be responsible for the breakdown of interpersonal relationships in homes, churches, and in public society. Two sins associated with alcohol fall in a fourth category of evils.

Drunkenness (methai) refers to excessive use of strong drink by individuals, and orgies (kômôi) probably refers to the drunken carousings commonly associated with such things as the worship of Bacchus, the god of wine. Finally, to show that this long list was only representative and not exhaustive, Paul added the words and the like. The apostle then solemnly warned the Galatians, as he had done when he was in their midst, that those who live like this, who habitually indulge in these fleshly sins will not inherit the future kingdom of God. This does not say that a Christian loses his salvation if he lapses into a sin of the flesh, but that a person who lives continually on such a level of moral corruption gives evidence of not being a child of God.

5:22-23. There is a pointed contrast here. As verse 16 indicated, there is no need for a believer to display the works of the flesh. Rather, by the Spirit’s power he can manifest the nine graces that are now listed. It is important to observe that the fruit here described is not produced by a believer, but by the Holy Spirit working through a Christian who is in vital union with Christ (cf. John 15:1-8). The word “fruit” is singular, indicating that these qualities constitute a unity, all of which should be found in a believer who lives under the control of the Spirit. In an ultimate sense this “fruit” is simply the life of Christ lived out in a Christian. It also points to the method whereby Christ is formed in a believer (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 1:21). The first three virtues are habits of mind which find their source in God. Love (agapē) is listed first because it is the foundation of the other graces. God is love and loves the world (cf. 1 John 4:8; John 3:16).

Such self-sacrificing love that sent Christ to die for sinners is the kind of love that believers who are Spirit-controlled manifest. Joy (chara) is a deep and abiding inner rejoicing which was promised to those who abide in Christ (cf. John 15:11). It does not depend on circumstances because it rests in God’s sovereign control of all things (cf. Rom. 8:28). Peace (eirēnē) is again a gift of Christ (cf. John 14:27). It is an inner repose and quietness, even in the face of adverse circumstances; it defies human understanding (cf. Phil. 4:7). The second triad reaches out to others, fortified by love, joy, and peace. Patience (makrothymia) is the quality of forbearance under provocation (cf. 2 Cor. 6:6; Col. 1:11; 3:12). It entertains no thoughts of retaliation even when wrongfully treated. Kindness (chrēstotēs) is benevolence in action such as God demonstrated toward men. Since God is kind toward sinners (cf. Rom. 2:4; Eph. 2:7) a Christian should display the same virtue (cf. 2 Cor. 6:6; Col. 3:12). Goodness (agathōsynē) may be thought of both as an uprightness of soul and as an action reaching out to others to do good even when it is not deserved. The final three graces guide the general conduct of a believer who is led by the Spirit. Faithfulness (pistis) is the quality which renders a person trustworthy or reliable, like the faithful servant in Luke 16:10-12. Gentleness (prautēs) marks a person who is submissive to God’s Word (cf. James 1:21) and who is considerate of others when discipline is needed (cf. “gently” in Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:25; “gentle” in 1 Cor. 4:21; Eph. 4:2; “gentleness” in Col. 3:12; 1 Peter 3:16). Self-control (enkratēia; this noun is used in the NT only here and in Acts 24:25; 2 Peter 1:6) denotes self-mastery and no doubt primarily relates to curbing the fleshly impulses just described. Such a quality is impossible to attain apart from the power of God’s Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:23). As a final summary statement Paul affirmed that there are no prohibitions (lit., there is not a law) against such virtues. In a litotes (understatement) he asserted that obviously no one would make laws against people who practice such things.

5:24. Paul next explained that believers (lit., “those who are of Christ Jesus”) need not be responsive to the sinful nature because they have crucified it. This does not refer to self-crucifixion or self-mortification. Rather, it refers to the fact that by means of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Christians were identified with Christ in His death and resurrection. Paul declared that this had been his experience (cf. 2:20) and that of all believers (cf. Rom. 6:1-6; Col. 2:11; 3:9). While co-crucifixion took place potentially at the cross, it becomes effective for believers when they are converted. This does not mean that their sin nature is then eradicated or even rendered inactive but that it has been judged, a fact believers should reckon to be true (cf. Rom. 6:11-12). So victory over the sinful nature’s passions and desires has been provided by Christ in His death. Faith must continually lay hold of this truth or a believer will be tempted to try to secure victory by self-effort.

5:25-26. Again Paul reminded the Galatians that in addition to a divine judgment of the sinful nature there is a divine enablement in the person of the Holy Spirit. He made the believer alive by regeneration (cf. John 3:5-6), so each believer is exhorted to keep in step (stouchōmen, trans. “follow” in Gal. 6:16) with the Spirit. Step by step one’s Christian walk should conform to the Spirit’s direction and enablement, lest believers become conceited, provoking and envying each other. The letter traits would be true of a walk
in the flesh (cf. 5:19-21) and may point to divisions in the Galatian churches occasioned by the Judaizing error (cf. v. 15). A believer is free from the Law of Moses and possesses liberty in the Spirit, but he must fulfill the law of Christ, and this can be done in the power of the Spirit. Such a life involves sacrificial service directed toward sinning Christians, burdened Christians, the pastor-teachers, and all people.

6:1. Paul deals with a hypothetical case of a Christian who is caught (prolēmphtē) in a sin, or better, is “caught by a sin.” The thought is that of someone running from sin but sin, being faster, overtakes and catches him. Two passages show how the legalists responded to such (cf. John 8:3-5; Acts 21:27-29). But a Christian should restore (katartizete, a word used in secular Gr. for setting broken bones and in the NT for mending fishing nets) him. The task of restoration is not to be undertaken by fledglings in the faith but by those who are spiritual, that is, believers who walk by the Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:16), and who are mature in the faith (cf. 1 Cor. 2:15; Heb. 5:13-14). Furthermore this delicate work must be done gently (proutētos; cf. Gal. 5:22) and with the consciousness that no one is immune from falling into sin (cf. 1 Cor. 10:12).

6:2. A serving Christian lends a helping hand with heavy loads (barē, cf. v. 5). Though the principle would apply to all burdens the context has special reference to the heavy and oppressive weight of temptation and spiritual failure. While the “spiritual” do the work of restoring, all believers are to become involved by prayer and encouragement. This, wrote Paul, will fulfill (anaplērōsete) the law of Christ, that is, the principle of love (cf. 5:14; John 13:34).

6:3-4. Something must be laid aside if a believer is to be a burden-bearer and that is conceit, an attitude that breeds intolerance of error in others and causes one to think he is above failure. The remedy for self-conceit is found in verse 4—everyone is told to test (dokimazetō; cf. 1 Peter 1:7) his own actions. This means that rather than comparing himself with others he should step back and take an objective look at himself and his accomplishments. Then he can take pride in himself over what God has done in and through his life (cf. Rom. 12:3). The Greek word kauchēma, rendered “pride,” means personal exultation, not sinful pride.

6:5. The Christian does in fact test himself by carrying his own load. This does not contradict verse 2 because the reference there is too heavy, crushing, loads (barē)—more than a man could carry without help. In this verse a different Greek word (phortion) is used to designate the pack usually carried by a marching soldier. It is the “burden” Jesus assigns to His followers (cf. Matt. 11:30). There are certain Christian responsibilities or burdens each believer must bear which cannot be shared with others. Jesus assured His disciples that such burdens were light.

6:6. One responsibility of each believer is to shoulder the financial support of the pastor-teachers in the church. Perhaps the Judaizers had influenced some of the believers to slack off in their support of the teachers, a special group who were giving their full time to this ministry and who were reimbursed for their labors (cf. 1 Cor. 9:7-14). This concept of voluntary giving to provide for the Lord’s servants was revolutionary since Jews were taxed for the support of their priests and Gentiles paid fees, made vows, etc., to sustain their religions. The admonition is clear that as a teacher shares the good things of the Word of God, a believer is to reciprocate by sharing all good things with his instructor.

6:7-8. These verses elaborate on the previous exhortation. First, a solemn warning is sounded that God cannot be mocked. No man can snub (myktērizetai, lit., “turn up the nose at”) God whose rule, a man reaps what he sows, is immutable. Each sower decides what his harvest will be. If a person sows to please his sinful nature, that is, if he spends his money to indulge the flesh, he will reap a harvest that will fade into oblivion. On the other hand if he uses his funds to support the Lord’s work, or sows to please the Spirit, and promotes his own spiritual growth, he will reap a harvest that will last forever. Though a broader application of the principle is legitimate it seems clear that Paul was dealing primarily with the question of financial support of Christian workers in the Galatian churches.

6:9. But Christians may become discouraged with spiritual sowing because the harvest is often long in coming. In the face of this reality the apostle charged the Galatians not to become weary or give up because the harvest is sure. (Paul included himself as he no doubt contemplated his sometimes frustrating labors on behalf of the Galatian Christians.) The reaping will come at God’s proper time, which may be only in part in this life and in full in the life to come at the judgment seat of Christ.

6:10. Christians have a measure of responsibility to all people to do good, when the occasions arise. When Jesus fed the 5,000, both saved and unsaved participated. So the benevolence of Christians should not be restricted, except that believers are to have the priority. As in a home, family needs are met first, then those of the neighbors. This passage then speaks clearly about Christian social responsibility, but it should be noted that it is addressed to individual believers. The church is not an agency for social work, though individual Christians are charged to minister in this way as they are able and have opportunity (cf. Rom. 12:17-21).
Commentary from The Bible Expositor and Illuminator

Everything about salvation in Christ shouts to us of living a holy life through the power of the Holy Spirit. The church was born for this. There can be no confusion. As believers we must realize that God has saved us to be holy, and He has provided His Spirit to create the capacity to live a holy, godly, God-pleasing life. What is such a life all about? This text gives us two things to think about. The first is that a holy life has a manifold expression—it is a multiplicity of virtues. We note that the term “fruit” is singular, but that one fruit has an abundance of expressions in the life of the Christian. All of these expressions should emerge in our lives in a unity. We should see a “fruit cluster,” a nine-fold expression of the sacred presence of the Spirit in our lives. The fruit of the Spirit is in contrast to the works of the flesh, each of which is a singular expression of sinful activity. Our sinful nature has many potential expressions of sin. But when the Holy Spirit is in control of our lives, we will see a fullness, a completeness, to our character in Christ. We should manifest love, the capacity to act in the best interests of others. We should manifest joy, an inner happiness in God that transcends our trials and troubles. We should manifest peace, an abiding tranquillity present in our minds and hearts. We should manifest longsuffering, a patience that is able to endure difficulty without a response of the flesh. We should also personify such things as gentleness and goodness, a kindly generosity of spirit toward others. We should show forth faith, or faithfulness—the ability to be steady, committed, and strong throughout all the seasons and challenges of life. And we should exhibit meekness, a humbleness of spirit that is willing to yield to others. Last but not least, we should display temperance, or self-control, diligently putting into practice what we are learning from God’s Word in a disciplined way. Do you see this “fruit cluster” emerging in your life? As we yield to the Holy Spirit hour by hour and minute by minute, these expressions of holy living will emerge in the life of the true Christian, to the glory of God. It is a wonderful and manifold statement of the difference Christ makes in our lives. The second thing to think about from the golden text is that a holy life yields not only this beautiful, manifold expression of fruit; it also constitutes a powerful force. Paul states the firm truth that against this kind of life there is no law. Nothing can be erected to stop it. If the Holy Spirit is producing this fruit, then it does not matter what the enemies of the Christian life do. It does not matter what the world does. This fruit will come. It is intrinsically powerful because it is of God; it comes from the presence of the Spirit. Let us do all we can to nurture the presence of the Holy Spirit within us, that His manifold and powerful fruit may emerge in our lives.

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

If you happen to see a finely executed oil painting, not just a reproduction but the handiwork of an artist with a brush, look at it closely. From a distance, we see a singular image. But up close, we can see the many-layered colors that create the vivid image. The unity of a fine painting is the result of thousands of details. So it is with lives transformed by the saving work of God. Such lives make a singular impression on us. They reflect how God saves undeserving sinners through faith in his Son. But that singular impression is the result of many fine details. God’s grace reshapes every aspect of a saved sinner’s life. Our text provides an experience like close examination of a fine oil painting. In it Paul paints a word portrait of God’s person. Closely examined, its details reveal a singular image of divine transformation.

This is the final lesson of this unit’s consideration of Paul’s letter to the Galatians. At the risk of oversimplifying, freedom could be a one-word summary of Paul’s emphasis up to the beginning of today’s lesson. For former pagans, this meant freedom from slavery to falsehood. For those who came to faith in Christ from Judaism, it meant freedom from repeated failures to keep God’s law. But freedom can be a dangerous thing. Can we trust ourselves to do what is right if we are free from law or threat? That’s the fundamental question Paul addressed as today’s lesson picks up where the text of last week’s concluded.

Major Theme Analysis

*Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV*
By Not Yielding to the Lust of the Flesh (Gal 5:18-21)

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.
19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,
20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,
21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time
past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Not yielding by being led by the Spirit (18)

Led by the Spirit for guidance and hope (Ps 25:4-5)
4 Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; 5 guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are
God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.

Led by the Spirit into truth (John 16:13)
13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he
will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

Led by the Spirit to inherit eternal life (Rom 8:11-14)
11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the
dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. 12 Therefore, brothers,
we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. 13 For if you live
according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body,
you will live, 14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Led by the Spirit to obtain power and self-discipline (2 Tim 1:7)
7 For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

Not yielding by not doing desires of the flesh (19-21)

Desires of the flesh leads to death (Rom 8:13)
13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the
misdeeds of the body, you will live,

Desires of the flesh choke God’s word (Mark 4:19)
19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke
the word, making it unfruitful.

Desires of the flesh sometimes degrades the body (Rom 1:24)
24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of
their bodies with one another.

Desires of the flesh is offering the body as an instrument of wickedness (Rom 6:12-13)
12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer the
parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who
have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of
righteousness.

Desires of the flesh is following the ways of this world (Eph 2:1-3)
2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you
followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in
those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our
sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.
Desires of the flesh belongs to the earthly/sinful nature (Col 3:5)

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

Desires of the flesh causes fights and quarrels (James 4:1)

1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you?

The list of the deeds of the flesh (from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Adultery heads the list in the King James Version. This is a sexual union outside of the bond of marriage by either husband or wife. Sexual immorality, the first item in the New International Version, is second in the King James, where it is translated fornication. This usually refers to sexual activity by unmarried persons. It may also refer generally to all forms of sexual immorality (from the underlying Greek comes our word “pornography”). Uncleanness/impurity describes the kind of moral impurity that makes a person unfit to enter the presence of God. (The Old Testament had a large number of laws that taught this concept to the Jews.) Lasciviousness/debauchery is total disregard for decency—in public or in private. Such sins can easily result when fleshly appetites are not restrained by the Spirit. Idolatry can be worshiping an idol or simply putting some part of one’s own life ahead of God. (Covetousness is called idolatry in Colossians 3:5.) Witchcraft refers to the use of magic potions, spells, and incantations in an attempt to tap into supernatural powers. Those who practice such sorcery or “magic arts” are subject to eternal destruction (Revelation 21:8). The modern revival of pagan practices such as Wicca that involve such activities is sobering indeed. The last seven vices in this verse could be called “social offenses.” Hatred is the feeling of ill will and hostility toward one’s enemies. Variance/discord means strife, a fracturing of unity within a family or group. Jealousy is a feeling that results from guarding what one has against all others. Emulations (KJV) are feelings of jealousy. Not all jealousy is evil—the Bible describes God Himself as jealous (Exodus 20:5). Paul also cites what he calls “godly jealousy” (2 Corinthians 11:2. Wrath is the explosion of temper or “fits of rage” (New International Version). Again, wrath or anger is not evil in and of itself. Just as there is godly jealousy, there is such a thing as righteous anger (Mark 3:5; Romans 2:8, 9), but such anger is kept under control. What Paul condemns is out-of-control anger. Strife/selfish ambition is what leads people to try to pull others down so they can try to climb above them. Seditions/dissensions, sometimes translated “divisions” (Romans 16:17), are literally “acts of standing apart.” Heresies/factions are acts of choosing up sides over pet doctrines. Originally the word heresy was not about a false doctrine itself, but about choosing sides over opinions. Those who cause divisions within the church are subject to being disfellowshipped (Romans 16:17; Titus 3:10). While jealousy may not always be bad, envy is. Envy not only covets what the other person has, it would rejoice to see the other person lose it. Murders are the unlawful taking of human life. (This item is in the King James Version, here, but not in the New International Version.) Drunkenness is the intoxicated state that comes from indulgence in alcoholic beverages. Revelings/orgies are riotous parties featuring drinking and sexual immorality. Some translations have “carousing.” As Paul has taught them in time past, people who do such things have no part in the kingdom of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10). This does not refer to the isolated lapse (cf. 1 John 1:9), but to willful, continuous sin.

By Displaying the Fruits of the Spirit  (Gal 5:22-26)

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Definition of the Spiritual fruit

The fruit of the Spirit (from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

The fruit of the Spirit is the harvest of virtues that is produced in the Spirit-filled life. While these characteristics are natural products of the Spirit, we must also actively cultivate them—each one is given as a command elsewhere in Scriptures. It is not enough to put aside the destructive works of the flesh; these must be replaced by something better. Love is the primary Christian virtue. It does not count the cost or
calculate the profit. Like God’s own love, it is not restricted to recipients who are lovable. *Joy* is our spontaneous, happy response to life in Christ. It is not dependent on our circumstances, but triumphs over them. *Peace* is more than the absence of war; it is the sense of well-being that comes from knowing we have all we need in Christ. A rough Hebrew equivalent is the well-known *shalom*. *Long-suffering or patience* is the ability to keep from losing our tempers with people. The Bible presents God Himself as long-suffering/patient (e.g., 1 Peter 3:20). *Gentleness*, or kindness, is the sweet disposition that wants to serve the needs of people. *Goodness* involves both correct morals and a generous heart—it is more active than gentleness. *Faithfulness*, as used in this context, is not so much about faith in God or faithfulness to God as it is about integrity or faithfulness in our dealings with one another and in being reliable (cf. Luke 16:10–12). The world sometimes mistakes meekness (the NIV has gentleness here) for weakness. The Christian, following the example of Jesus Himself, is ready to yield his or her own rights for the good of others. Meekness involves holding oneself under control (cf. Numbers 12:3; Matthew 5:5).

*Temperance/self-control* is the ability of one’s spirit to control one’s flesh. It is not moderation in one’s vices, but the kind of total self-control that is possible only when one is led by the Spirit. Law is designed to restrain evil, but there is no law or limitation on these virtues! When these are our pursuit, we are completely free.

**The nine fruit of the Spirit (from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator)**

These nine virtues form a complete harvest of the Spirit. “Love” is the greatest of gifts, the greatest of the commandments, and the chief identifying mark of Christians. Love is the foundation for all the fruit of the Spirit. The Greek word is *agape* and means a self-sacrificing love as was demonstrated by Christ (cf. John 3:16). “Joy” comes from within and is not to be confused with happiness, which usually depends on what happens. We can experience joy even when we are suffering. Persecution could not drive joy from the early Christians (Acts 8:8; 13:52; 15:3). “Peace” is the result of our reconciliation with God (Rom. 5:1). It is not just the absence of strife, as when a war ends. This inner peace comes from God’s Spirit (cf. Phil. 4:7). “Longsuffering,” or patience, is a quality that most of us wish we had more of. Both circumstances and people test our patience. “Gentleness” is the opposite of anger and is translated “kindness” elsewhere (Col. 3:12; Titus 3:4). “Goodness” is a disposition to do good to others (cf. Gal. 6:10). “Faith” could be translated “faithfulness.” It is to be trustworthy, both as a believer and in our various relationships. “Meekness” is not weakness. Both Moses and Jesus are described as meek, but neither was weak. This word was used of wild horses that had been taught to obey. It is strength under control. “Temperance” is more than abstinence from alcohol. The word means self-control and can be applied to all areas of our lives.

**Displaying the fruits to indicate crucified flesh (22-24)**

**Crucify the flesh by crucifying the old self (Rom 6:6)**

6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-

**Crucify the flesh by clothing ourselves with Jesus (Rom 13:14)**

14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

**Crucify the flesh by crucifying the world to us (Gal 6:14)**

14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

**Crucify the flesh by Jesus living through us (Gal 2:20)**

20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

**Displaying the fruits by living in the Spirit (25)**

**Living in the Spirit is displaying the light of God (Eph 5:8-9)**

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)
Living in the Spirit because the Spirit gives life (John 6:63)
63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.

Living in the Spirit is displaying a life of righteousness (Rom 8:10)
10 But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

Living in the Spirit provides a soft heart for God (Ezek 36:26)
26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

By Helping Others Through the Spirit (Gal 6:1-5)
1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.
2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.
3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.
4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.
5 For each one shall bear his own load.

Helping others through spiritual restoration (6:1)
A restoration from wandering from the truth (James 5:19-20)
19 My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

A restoration from sin (1 John 5:16)
16 If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that.

A restoration from doubting (Jude 22-23)
22 Be merciful to those who doubt; 23 snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear-hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

A restoration from grief caused by sin (2 Cor 2:5-8)
5 If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent-not to put it too severely. 6 The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. 7 Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.

A restoration from idleness and weakness (1 Thess 5:14)
14 And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

Helping others through bearing one another's burdens (2)
Bearing others failings (Rom 15:1-2)
1 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. 2 Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

Bearing with one another in love (Eph 4:2)
2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.
Bearing with one another through forgiveness (Col 3:13)
13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Bearing with one another as if sharing their suffering (Heb 13:1-3)
1 Keep on loving each other as brothers. 2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. 3 Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

Helping others with humility (3)

Humility that considers others better than ourself (Phil 2:3)
3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

Humility that comes from being one of God's chosen people (Col 3:12)
12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Humility that should be shown toward all men (Titus 3:2)
2 to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.

Humility that comes from godly wisdom (James 3:13)
13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

Helping others by performing self-examination (4-5)

Self-examination to see if we are in the faith (2 Cor 13:5)
5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you-unless, of course, you fail the test?

Self-examination to consider our ways (Ps 119:59)
59 I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to your statutes.

Self-examination that results in returning to the Lord (Lam 3:40)
40 Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD.

Self-examination that judges our actions (1 Cor 11:31)
31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.

Self-examination to ensure we haven't fallen short of God's promises (Heb 4:1)
4:1 Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.

By Sowing to Please the Spirit (Gal 6:6-10)

6 Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. 
7 Do not be deceived. God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 
8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 
9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 
10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.
Sow by sharing the word (6)

Sharing the word so that it will bear fruit (Col 1:3-6)
4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints- 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel 6 that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth.

Sharing the word so that a full understanding will be received (Philem 6)
6 I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.

Sharing the word in response to why we have the hope in God (1 Peter 3:15)
15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

Know that what I sow I will reap (7)

Sow righteousness and reap love (Hos 10:12)
12 Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.

God will judge based on what a person sows (Rom 2:6-8)
6 God "will give to each person according to what he has done." 7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. 8 But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

Sow sparingly and reap sparingly, sow generously and reap generously (2 Cor 9:6)
6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

All sowing has one purpose in God (1 Cor 3:8)
8 The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor.

Sowing by persevering in doing good (8-10)

Persevere because labor in the Lord is never in vain (1 Cor 15:58)
58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Persevere because we should never tire of doing right (2 Thess 3:13)
13 And as for you, brothers, never tire of doing what is right.

Persevere because in Jesus, who endured all for us (Heb 12:3)
3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Persevere because the reward is eternal life (Rom 2:7)
7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.

Persevere because inwardly we are being renewed daily (2 Cor 4:16)
16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.
Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh
(To see Dr. Deffinbaugh’s commentary click this link: https://bible.org/seriespage/war-without-and-war-within%E2%80%94part-1-galatians-513-26)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
Today’s text sets forth key ideas. One is that God has a purpose for our existence. We are to be like him in his goodness, grace, and love. We find true satisfaction only when we fulfill that purpose. A second key idea is that we fail to fulfill God’s purpose when we pursue something that supplants God’s grace. We too often prefer a life centered on selfishness instead of God’s gracious love. Paul uses a single word to stand for this dark, universal tendency: flesh. By that he does not mean that our physical bodies or their desires are evil in and of themselves. Rather, he means that as a person lives by selfishness instead of God’s grace, that person lives as if God were not in the picture. That person lives as if flesh is all that matters. But there is an antidote to the life of the flesh: God’s Holy Spirit. He empowers a person to overcome the old life that ignores God, adopting attitudes and behaviors that reflect what God has done. The Spirit’s power is sure, but it requires our cooperation so that we fulfill God’s purpose and reflect his grace. Today’s text gives us a huge task. But it gives us just as big a reason: the grace of God that grants eternal life by faith in Christ. And it gives us just as great a power: God’s Holy Spirit, who enables us to overcome the old life to reflect God’s grace.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary
1. We are protected from the works of the flesh if we allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit (Gal. 5:18-21)
2. Only the Holy Spirit can produce His godly virtues in our lives (vss. 22-23).
3. It took Christ’s crucifixion to break sin’s grip (vss. 24-26)
4. Those in the body of Christ must minister selflessly to one another (6:1-3)
5. Help is received better when delivered with love. We should always act in humility (vss. 4-5)
6. We all are in the same race and should not compete with but help one another to the finish (Gal. 6:6-10; cf. Rom. 12:5)