

GALATIANS 5:16-24

Pray: Fill my cup, Lord; I lift it up, Lord—come and quench this thirsting of my soul! Bread of heaven, feed me 'til I want no more. Here's my cup, fill it up and make me whole.

R. Blanchard

Read Galatians 5:16-24. In Galatians, the Greek word *flesh* can mean a physical body, person or humanity (2:16, 20). But it often refers to purely human thinking, our sinful mindset; that's the case in this section. The NIV uses *human effort, sinful nature, the ordinary way* to express this.

Remember it was because of their sinful flesh that the Galatians had been dead in sin, apart from God, hopeless. Recall Paul's words to them in 3:2-3, 5.

1. Jot down just a few things that come to mind as you think of the word *help*.

A Choice To Make: Galatians 5:16-18. *Desires* is a very strong word meaning deep, overriding, compelling passions or purposes; older translations use *lusts*.

2. Back in 5:13 we were warned literally, *don't give the flesh a toe-hold, a base camp*. Briefly, what is going on in every believer, according to 5:17?

Let's take a closer look at the participants in this struggle to discern their deep desires/natures.

3. Read John 16:7. The Spirit is called *parakletos* (*lit. one called alongside*). This is translated with three words: Helper, Comforter and Counselor. How do those "names" encourage you?

4. What else do you learn about the Spirit in John 16:8, 13-14, Romans 5:5b, and Zechariah 4:6b?

5. Our flesh is "just naturally" in utter opposition to what we've seen concerning the Spirit. What would you expect some of its very strong tendencies to be?

6. To dig deeper: What insights are added in John 6:63 and Proverbs 16:25?

7. These days, in what situations are you most encountering your flesh in action (with its self-rooted fears, cravings, plans, responses to others, etc.)? Tell what happens.

Alone, we're no match for our deceptive flesh. But the apostle uses two everyday pictures that teach how to avoid its destructive desires.

8. a. Re-read Galatians 5:16. It tells us literally, *walk along day after day by/in/with the Spirit*. What does this mean? What might this look like in your life (especially when your flesh "attacks")?

- b. Paul continues to address our struggle in 5:18, reminding us that we are *led* by the Spirit (a role He has throughout Scripture). What attitude/relationship does that ask of us?

9. Optional question to consider: Note the last part of verse 18—how is this daily relationship of being led by the Spirit different from being under the Law?

10. The Spirit has mighty "tools" He uses in our lives to encourage, defend, bless and direct us day by day and help us in the fight. Some are given below. Underline what stands out to you.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Rejoice always, Pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances...not neglecting to meet together ..but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Colossians 3, I Thessalonians 5, Hebrews 10)

Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. (Hebrews 12)

Two Outcomes to Consider: Galatians 5:19-23. Note on 5:21b: continual, unconcerned, flagrant practice of these behaviors points to an unsaved condition.

11. a. What one or two basic, overall facts do you think Paul wants to make clear as he gives us these two lists together here, one after the other?

b. Jot down brief observations on 5:19-21. (Note that this is not meant to be an exhaustive list.)

12. Paul's choice of opening words in 5:22, "*But the fruit of the Spirit...*," is significant. What ideas do you think he is communicating?

13. The Spirit faithfully brings forth His fruit, meeting our true needs as we ever turn to, follow, and wait upon Him. Briefly define these. Think how each might look in your life today.

love

joy

peace

patience

kindness

goodness

faithfulness

gentleness

self-control

Notes: 1. love is God's agape, unmoveable, endless; 2. patience is literally "a long temper;" 3. kindness is related to mellowness, as of aged wine; it describes Christ's yoke in Matthew 11; 4. goodness includes usefulness, uprightness.

14. Optional: Do some of these especially stand out to you today (a deep desire, a remembrance of past help, a new insight, a reason to trust and hope)? If so, how would you like to respond?

A Victory That Is Sure: Galatians 5:24.

Like all believers, as you battle with your flesh and its old patterns you will experience both times of glad escape as well as times of stumbling, discouragement, and the accuser's attack.

15. Whatever your situation today, 5:24 reminds first of all, as a believer you "*belong to Christ.*" What do those words communicate to you?
16. This verse also says that believers "_____ the flesh, with its passions and desires." What does the word "have" indicate?

Here Paul again points us back to the Cross. We've been "ransomed with the precious blood of Christ" so we're His forever (I Peter 1:18-19). We're "placed into Christ," *united with Him in His death and resurrection* (Galatians 3:27, 2:20). So in Him our flesh *has been* crucified and utterly ended. Hard as today's battle can be, we face a defeated foe—in heaven the triumph will be complete. There we'll declare, as Corrie ten Boom used to love to say, Jesus is Victor!

17. Personal: How do you find encouragement today as you consider that everything which you now battle in your flesh received a death blow and is ultimately defeated, because of Jesus' finished work?

Paul would add in closing, walk now in Christ's victory. He'll say in later letters, by the Spirit's power *put to death, put off* the destructive vanquished flesh (you're no longer its slave, its power is broken). *Put on, receive, walk in His newness of life* to the glory of the Father and Son.

Finish up your study time with thanksgiving, praise, and firm hope:

Let the weak say, I am strong; let the poor say, I am rich;

Let the blind say, I can see; It's what the Lord has done in me.

Hosanna, hosanna, to the Lamb that was slain! Hosanna, hosanna, Jesus died and rose again!

Hillsong United

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen. Ephesians 3:20-21 (NAS)