

XXIII. The Holy Spirit in Biblical Perspective

Led by the Spirit

“Walking in the Spirit—Grieving the Spirit”

Galatians 5:16–26

Dr. Harry L. Reeder III

September 25, 2016 – Morning sermon

We will be in this passage for this study and the next one. This is God’s Word. It’s the truth. Galatians 5:16–26 says [16] *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. [17] For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. [18] But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. [19] Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, [20] idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, [21] envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. [22] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. [24] And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.*

[25] If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. [26] Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

I’m always conscience of two things when I’m preaching expositional texts of Scripture. One is that I need to do a little bit of review from where I’ve been and two are those who haven’t heard the previous study. Each year we focus on one theme. This year is being led by the Spirit. Our theme verse is Romans 8:14 which says ‘Those who are led by the Spirit, these are the sons of God.’ In other words being led by the Spirit is not a second blessing. Led by the Spirit is the essential blessing that evidences itself in those who know and follow Christ.

The phrasing that has governed us this year, ‘led by the Spirit,’ is found in two passages of Scripture. We spent a number of studies on that glorious text of Romans 8 which deals with the ministry of the Holy Spirit. This chapter included our theme verse but it also included another verse that said those who were not led by the Spirit did not belong to Christ. So what is essentially clear here is that the leading of the Holy Spirit is not a second blessing after you come to Christ for it’s the work of God’s grace to bring you to Christ and the evidence of God’s grace that you are in Christ and that you belong to Him and He belongs to you.

There is a second place where it says those who are led by the Spirit are walking by the Spirit. This is in the passage for this study in Galatians 5. It also goes on to say that those who are led by the Spirit are walking by the Spirit and are keeping step with the Spirit. We will be in this passage for this study and the next one. There is a war that is irreconcilable and is with you all the way until you get to Jesus. You did not get saved to sail on a cruise ship. You were saved to be enlisted in the army of God and to be on a battleship. We have fields of conquest yet we do not do it with the weapons of the flesh. We do so by the weapons of the Spirit.

The Spirit wages war against the flesh and the flesh is raging war against the Spirit. That war is outside of us in the world and it’s also inside of us where we fight it every single day. You have an old man within you that wants to get back on that throne and you have the Spirit of

God who is within you to keep Jesus on the throne of the new heart that He has given to you, when He converted you and brought you from death unto life. That war is irreconcilable. So if you are a believer this is a war that you are in.

Two studies ago we talked about blasphemy of the Holy Spirit and that is something believers can't do by definition. Believers can't be guilty of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit because blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is claiming that the work of the Spirit is from the kingdom of darkness and must be rejected, profaned and defamed. If you are defaming the work of the Spirit and the work of the Spirit is to bring you to Christ in whom there is forgiveness of all sins, then blasphemy of the Spirit is the unpardonable sin because you are saying 'no' to the only One who can bring you to Him who is the only One who can save you.

We found out that some people will have the door of grace shut even before the door of death who blasphemy the Holy Spirit. Blasphemy of the Spirit is one that can't be done by believers because they are one that has been led by the Spirit to be with Christ and is baptized with the Holy Spirit and sealed in Christ, which we studied in the last study. Anyone who does blasphemy of the Spirit cannot come to Christ who alone can forgive because you can't come to Christ without the Holy Spirit. That is why the Bible says those who are led by the Spirit belong to Christ because you never come to Christ unless the Spirit leads you. If you call the Spirit unholy and His work unholy that sets you apart from the only One who can save you because that is what He has come to do.

There is a sin in relationship to the Holy Spirit that believers can do, will do and do. That is what we'll look at in this study. In the next few studies we'll look more in depth at the fruits of the Spirit and the deeds of the flesh. The fruit of the Spirit is the evidence of those being led by the Spirit, keeping step with the Spirit and walking with the Spirit. First we are going to go through this Galatians 5 text, look at a question and then I'll give you a takeaway.

This Galatians text begins by telling us that we've been saved for freedom but it's not a freedom of anarchy. How has He set us free? He has set us free from sin – sin's penalty, sin's power. We are forgiven and right with God through Jesus Christ. He has set us free from sin's power for we do not live any longer under the dominion of sin. We have been set free from its penalty for we have a new record. We have been set free from its power for we have a new heart. But we still have sin living in us and it wants to reclaim dominion.

This sin living in us is called 'the old man' in the Bible. It is that old way of thinking, feeling and doing that is all about us. It keeps wanting to gain the ascendancy every day in our life. When it does then the deeds of the flesh are done. When the Spirit of God has led you to Christ now the Spirit of God leads you into life for Christ. When the Spirit of God is at work in your life every day then you are killing the old man and pursuing Christ. So let's look at what Paul says about this.

Galatians 5:16–17 says [16] *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.* (So the Spirit of God is at war with the old man and the old man is at war with the Spirit of God.) [17] *For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.* You have the Spirit of God within you and that means you wouldn't have come to the Spirit of Christ without the Spirit but you still have the old man which is the flesh that is at work within you.

The Spirit and the flesh is an irreconcilable war that is going on. What does this mean? The first thing is that they stand in opposition to each other. The word 'flesh' in the Bible is a very technical term and is weighted with a lot of meaning. It begins in Genesis 6:5–6 which says

[5] *The LORD saw that the wickedness of man (flesh) was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* [6] *And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.* From then on that word flesh is not referring to a physical body but it is a theological term – men and women living independent of God, focused and relying upon self, devoted to oneself, self-absorbed, self-reliant, self-gratifying and self-exalting. That is the flesh and that’s the way we live to one degree or another prior to our conversion.

Then the Spirit of God came and brought us from death unto life so that we would say ‘no’ to our self and repent of our sin and our self. We would flee to Christ no longer reliant upon self but reliant upon God so that our works would be works of the Spirit – fruit of the Spirit and works of grace – of what God has empowered within us. So instead of self-focused it’s Christ-focused and instead of self-centered, it’s Christ-centered. Instead of self-gratification it is God’s gratification and God’s pleasure that begins to fill our soul. When you come to Christ, you are baptized with that Spirit, seals you with Himself and puts His Spirit within you but you still have an old man within you that is constantly at war with the Spirit and the Spirit will sign no peace treaty with the old man. So Spirit and flesh are two different ways of life.

The Spirit and the flesh are not an even contest. Galatians 5:16 says [16] *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.* When we walk in the Spirit the old man will die but when we walk away from the Spirit then the old man gets an open door into our life. So we want to walk in the Spirit. [17] *For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.* What is that telling you?

In Romans 7 the Bible says this about the Christian life from the Apostle Paul. Romans 7:18–20 says [18] *For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.* [19] *For I do not do the good I want,* *but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.* [20] *Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.* This shows the war we are in where periodically I falter but the great thing about this passage is that God has changed your ‘wanter’ for the deeds of the flesh that I wanted to do, now when I’m doing those deeds of the flesh I’m doing what I don’t want to do.

That is what I love about this passage in Galatians 5:17 when it says [17] *For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.* If you have been led by the Spirit to Christ then you have a new want. You will falter and fail for it is all imperfect but the old man is no longer reigning in our life or in dominion but he still shows up. Until we go to be with the Lord we are at war with that old man but we have in us the Holy Spirit and when we walk in the Spirit then the old man gets killed. Let’s look further into Galatians 5.

Galatians 5:18–22 says [18] *But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.* (The law is good but it doesn’t have power.) [19] *Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, [20] idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, [21] envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

This passage is not teaching that if you can get rid of all these things then you can earn your way to heaven. No, it is saying that those who by grace have inherited heaven are not identified by these things as a way of life. Do they still have the incidents in life? Absolutely, but it doesn’t identify their life. Those who have inherited is a gift of grace, the Kingdom of

God. So what are the characteristics of those who are being led by the Spirit and who are now being led by the Spirit in life for Christ?

Galatians 5:22–24 says [22] *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* [23] *gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.* [24] *And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.* How do you crucify the flesh? You do it in the power of the Spirit. Now here is the premise. Galatians 5:25 says [25] *If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.* In other words, if the Spirit of God has brought and called you from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of Light, from yourself and sin to Christ, from death unto life, then let the Spirit of God lead you in life. Keep in step with the Spirit.

My little effort in trying to stay in shape includes hopefully a daily jog which is no longer a jog but a slog. I used to run but now I'm in the arena of what I identify as a slog. There is a place in front of my house that is a mile long and it is uphill one way and downhill the other way. So I slog downhill and walk uphill. I'm blessed with a wife and a daughter who sometimes go with me. Their pace in walking though maybe faster than my slog going down and I am always trying to keep in step with them.

Have you noticed the progression here? Led by the Spirit, then walking by the Spirit and that means to keep step with the Spirit. Those are the things that He has tied together. So in your life you have been led by the Spirit to Christ. Now you are being led by the Spirit of God for Christ. Now here's my question. How many of you fail in following the Spirit of God and keeping in step with Him? I fail. We all fail. What happens, not if, when we are led by the flesh and not by the Spirit? We falter. Now I want to give you the takeaway and unfold it for you.

The takeaway is those having been led by the Spirit of God to life in Christ are called to be led by the Spirit of God in life for Christ. I'm not being critical in what I'm about to say because I know what the heart is trying to say but some people will pray this; "O Lord give me more of Your Spirit." I think that is right-hearted but wrong-headed. Our problem is not that we don't have enough of the Spirit but our problem is that the Spirit doesn't have enough of us. I don't need more of the Spirit. I need to surrender more of me to the Spirit to Christ. There is no shortage of power system in me. The problem is I'm not surrendering in certain areas, ways or things.

The Holy Spirit has not been given to us so that we can move from exotic experience to exotic experience. Does the Holy Spirit give experiences? Yes. Have I had them? Yes. Do I enjoy them? Yes. He has been given to bring me to Christ and give me to Christ. He has been given also to give Christ to me. He has been given to go to work on me to make me more like Christ and less like me. The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to kill us and set us free to live Jesus. Galatians 2:20 says [20] *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.* That is the work of the Spirit.

Do I sense that I need more of the Spirit? Yes, but the problem is that I need to surrender more of me to the Spirit and not that I need more of the Spirit. You will have wonderful experiences in the Christian life but there will also be a lot of adversity and suffering. I have Jesus because I have the Spirit of Christ in me who led me to Christ to give me to Christ and He has given Christ to me. Now I'm being led by the Spirit, walking by the Spirit, keeping in step with the Spirit so that there is less of me every day and more of Jesus every day. That is keeping step with the Spirit of God.

What about those moments that I falter and I'm not led by the Spirit? In those moments that brings something that we call grieving the Spirit for when you are led by the Spirit you are walking by the Spirit and keeping step with the Spirit but when you're not being led by the Spirit but by the flesh, in those moments you begin to quench the Spirit. So in those moments when we falter and are not being led by the Spirit, we quench and grieve the Spirit. I want to show you two texts of Scripture.

The first text is in I Thessalonians 5. Here Paul is blessing the church at Thessalonica and he gives them a series of final instructions. This is the 'honey, don't forget...' list to this church. This is one of those things on this list. I Thessalonians 5:19 says [19] *Do not quench the Spirit.* Don't use a paraphrase Bible as your study Bible but they are good tools. The best paraphrase Bible is the Amplified Bible. For this verse the Amplified Bible says [19] *Do not quench [subdue, or be unresponsive to the working and guidance of, or throw water on the fire of, or dampen] the [Holy] Spirit.*

When our trail life guys go out to camp and want to put out their fire they scatter the ashes and pour water on it. Don't pour water on the Spirit of God in your life. Don't quench it. When you begin to be led by the flesh you dampen the work of the Spirit. Only unbelievers can do blasphemy of the Spirit but only believers can do quenching of the Spirit because the assumption is the Holy Spirit is in you and He is at work. Another phrase directly related to quenching the Spirit is grieving the Spirit. Let's look at Ephesians 4.

Ephesians 4:30 says [30] *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.* You have been baptized and sealed with the Holy Spirit but you can grieve the Holy Spirit. When you say 'no' to wanting to love the Lord with all your heart, soul and mind and you want to love yourself and say 'yes' to yourself, that grieves the Holy Spirit. What does that tell us? The Holy Spirit is not an it. You can't grieve an it. It is Him. He is a Person. He has power but He is not just a Power. He brings force and energy but He is not just a force and energy. When you say 'yes' to the flesh, it not only grieves the Spirit but it grieves Christ too, because that is how Christ is in you, by the Spirit.

If you know Christ today you have been sealed and baptized by the Spirit and there is not one place you go that He is not with you. In the middle of the night when you're in front of the computer, He is there. When you are trying to decide about that expense account He is right there. He is always with you. We are either surrendered and imperfectly but purposefully being led by Him or we are saying 'no' and we grieve Him. God has been pleased legally by the blood and righteousness of Jesus but God now has a relationship with you and in relationships we can please God. That is why He says in Ephesians 4:1, [1] *I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,* pleasing Him in all respects. This isn't what we do to be saved but because we're saved we want to give pleasure somehow.

I don't understand fully how He saved me but now somehow God my Father gets pleasure from what is happening in my life when I'm surrendering to Him. All I am bringing to Him is what He is doing in me. I'm not creating anything for Him but He actually takes pleasure but we can also bring grief to Him. I understand that God is not a man of emotions but these words mean something and they are in there for a reason to communicate something to us. It means that I can bring displeasure to Him. I can grieve Him. What would this mean for me? I want to give you some things to think about here.

One, to walk by the Spirit is to say 'no' to the desires and deceptions of the flesh. When the flesh says 'nobody will know' the Holy Spirit is with you. He will know. The Holy

Spirit is not in me for feel-good experiences. He is in me to give me to Christ and to give Christ to me. His presence and power enable me to kill me and make me more like Christ for Christ. I have been set free from me and sin to Christ and loving obedience. I have freedom in Christ and I will not let the flesh have a foot hold.

To be very practical, I try to do this way before I get to my quiet time with the Lord in the morning. I try to do two things before I get out of the bed. I try to say 'no' to the desires and deceptions of the flesh. When I get out of this bed it is not about me or dependent upon me but I'm dependent on Him and it's all about Him. God, please cement that into my heart before my feet hit the floor. Kill the old man every morning. Paul says, 'I die daily.' Put to death the old man every day.

That brings us to step two and that is to say 'yes' to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Be led by the Spirit. Keep in step with the Spirit. How do I keep in step with the Spirit? There are seven things to help you stay walking with the Spirit.

The first thing is to be found in the Word of God. It is the Spirit who gives life and My Words are Spirit and life. You need to have a hunger and thirst for His Word. I want to be in the Word of God every day and that's why I encourage a morning quiet time. Can you have a quiet time anytime of the day? Yes but I need it in the morning to get in step with the Spirit of God because He always works with the Word of God.

Number two is prayer to God. God is speaking to me through His Word and I speak back to Him in prayer. I pray to God, praying in the Spirit. I now want to pray about anything and everything and talk to You.

Thirdly, this leads us to the blessing of being with the people of God, His church. One of the ways I can start worship every single Lord's Day is the Lord is in His Holy Temple, let all the earth keep silent for you are the temple of the Holy Spirit. When we assemble the Holy Spirit is there and brings Christ to bear upon us. If His assembly is not my delight then the desires of the flesh have overruled and I don't want to walk with the Spirit. When the church gathers, Jesus is here by the Spirit and I want to be here when His people assemble because He indwells and inhabits the praises of His people.

Fourthly, is communion with God. Make time every day to be alone with God. Our Campus Outreach ministry uses the acronym TAWG (Time Alone With God) which I love.

The fifth one is the commandments of God. We delight in His commandments for His law tells us how to love Him. When I say 'no' to His law I am telling Him that I love myself more than I love Him because what is the purpose of the law? It is to show me that I'm a sinner and to show me how to love God. It shows me I need to come to Christ and what Christ loves. The Spirit teaches me how to love the Lord with all my heart, soul and mind in the first Tablet and how to love those who are made in His image in the second Tablet. So I walk in the Spirit by using the law. The law doesn't have the power but the law has the directions. The Spirit of God brings the power.

Sixthly, you want to embrace the commission of God. What is the commission of God? [19] *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age* (Matthew 28:19–20). When you and I embrace disciple-making of all the nations including our own and ourselves, the Holy Spirit is right with us. We are keeping in step with the Holy Spirit through the Great Commission from God.

Lastly, is the worship of God. When we worship God comes into the lives of His people in an amazing way, as He inhabits the praises of His people.

So what if you say 'no' to those things whereby I keep step with the Spirit of God? Then the desires and deceptions of the flesh will take over and show up. When the flesh takes over the Word of God is easily dismissed and there won't be a hunger for His Word. In other words, when the flesh takes over there will be the opposite of these seven things that happen. We won't like to pray and our prayers are hindered. There is a loss of desire to be among the people of God. The worship of God comes only when it fits into your schedule. There will be a loss of communion with God. It's like the heavens are brass. There will be a loss of purpose and how to love God. Actually we don't lose purpose when we begin to do the deeds of the flesh we just become pawns in the purposes of Satan, into meaningless despair, chaos and death. Worship becomes for your entertainment and the worship of God doesn't become important anymore, unless we're led by the Spirit.

Only believers can grieve and quench the Spirit. Now I have some bad news. Believers can, do and will grieve and quench the Spirit. Here is some good news. Believers will ultimately be grieved when they grieve the Spirit because of the Spirit. I love this. I find myself doing some of the things on the deeds of the flesh side and I don't see myself perfectly doing the fruits of the Spirit so that means I'm letting the flesh in every once in a while in my life. When that happens I'm dampening, grieving the Spirit but the Spirit of God will never be supplanted or diminished because He comes with power to bring grief and conviction to me that I have grieved him. That will bring me fleeing back to Jesus, led to Christ who forgives me, who enables me and empowers me to walk differently for Him.

Here is the great news. *[6] And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6).* Please walk with the Spirit. Keep step with the Spirit. In this study I have tried to outline how you can do this and just know that sometimes you will grieve and quench the Spirit when you are led by the flesh but He is always with you. He is a Person. You can dampen His work but you cannot stop Him, supplant Him or diminish Him. He will come back for you. He will bring you from the pig trough in the name of the Son back to the Father. He will bring conviction and grief over our grieving Him and we will come to Christ and be restored in the joy of our salvation. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Take a few moments for the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart. What would He teach you from this text? Holy Spirit, I cannot tell you how grateful I've been throughout these last couple of weeks dealing with this text to remind me that I have a personal relationship that brings pleasure or grieves and that You're with me. You will not leave me nor forsake me so even when I would quench, dampen or grieve You will bring conviction and grief to me that it's not about me but bring me back to Christ where it's all about Him and I thank You. I praise You that You will not be supplanted. There is not only forgiveness but transformation. You will give Christ to me and me to Christ and not stop until You make me like Christ. I praise You, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

Led by the Spirit—Walking in the Spirit
Spirit – Flesh

Deeds of the Flesh – Fruit of the Spirit

What happens when—not if—we are led by the flesh and not by the Spirit?

Life Takeaway

Those having been led by the Spirit of God to life in Christ are called to be led by the Spirit of God in life for Christ.

When led by the Spirit – Walking by the Spirit When led by the flesh – Grieve/Quench the Spirit

Walking by the Spirit

1. Say no to the desires and deceptions of the Flesh

The Holy Spirit is not in me for feel-good experiences. He is in me to give me to Christ and give me to Christ. His presence and power enable me to kill me and make me more like Christ for Christ. FREEDOM

2. Say yes to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit

- Word of God
- Prayer to God
- People of God
- Communion with God
- Commandments of God
- Commission from God
- Worship of God

Only believers can grieve and quench the Spirit.

BAD NEWS

Believers can/do/will grieve and quench the Spirit.

GOOD NEWS

Believers will ultimately be grieved when they grieve the Spirit because of the Spirit.

GREAT NEWS

He who began a good work in you will complete it to the Day of Christ Jesus.