

## The Epistle to the Galatians: The Gospel of Grace

### Lesson 17: Walking by the Spirit – Part 2: The Contrast and the Conquest (5:19-25)

**“Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 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. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”**

A few weeks ago, I took the kids into the vegetable garden to do some weeding. My vegetable plants were still small, some only 3 or 4 inches tall. And because of the constant daily rain that we get here in Seattle, (insert chuckle here) some of the weeds had grown a bit too. The first question that my daughter asked me was, “Which ones do I pull?” To her, being inexperienced in tending to a garden, everything growing was green and leafy. She needed me to point out to her the distinguishing marks of the leaf which identified it as a member of the pepper family long before the plant even produced a single flower.

As people who live in a consumer-driven, instant society, we want what we want, and we want it now. And because we’re a people who wait for little in life, it’s good that we consider the analogy of the vegetable garden today. While a bit more complicated than this easy statement, it takes roughly 4-5 months between the planting of a tomato seed, and the harvesting of a tomato. Along the way, the seed/seedling/plant need care given to it by way of watering, fertilizing, pruning, pulling of surrounding weeds. There is a lot of work, and care, that is poured into the plant, all for the purpose of one day enjoying the fruit that it produces. But we need to remember that the work always comes before the fruit. No one plants a tomato seed, and pulls up a lawn chair to watch the growth process. Growth always takes time at every stage.

There are two types of people in the world: vegetable plants, and weeds. In God’s garden of earth, everyone grows up as a weed. In His grace, God uproots some weeds, miraculously changes their DNA so as to cause them to be born-again into the image of a vegetable plant, replants them into the soil amongst the weeds, and cares for them so that they grow to produce delicious fruit. In God’s time, he uproots the weeds and destroys them, and in God’s time, He harvests the vegetable plants. There are vegetable and weeds in the garden, both having their own visible characteristics from seedlings onward, both bearing their own fruit which finally identify their true selves.

Spurgeon comments, *“Fruit does not start from the tree perfectly ripe at once. First comes a flower, then a tiny formation that shows that the flower has set. Then a berry appears, but it is very sour. You may not gather it. Leave it alone a little while, and allow the sun to ripen it. By and by it fills out, and you have the apple in the full proportions of beauty, and with a mellow flavor that delights the taste.”*<sup>1</sup>

*Love spring up in the heart and increases by a sure growth. Love is not produced by casting the mind in the mold of imitation, or by fastening grace to a man’s actions as a thing outside of himself.”*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Spurgeon, Charles *Commentary: Galatians* Lexham Press p.128

Spurgeon is saying that Christian growth, (while it is sourced by the Holy Spirit) is nevertheless slow and gradual, just like the tomato is slow to come. No growth is instantaneous. All growth is gradual. If you have been a Christian for even six months, than you know this is true. This slow growth produces in us not only patience with ourselves (and others as they grow), but also dependence upon the Holy Spirit as He grows us along through our days.

Not only is our growth in Christ gradual, but it is inevitable. God is the master gardener. God is not like my mother. My mother could kill an aloe plant. For those of you who don't understand that, you basically have to forget an aloe plant in your closet for three weeks to kill one. But God is the master gardener. God always produces fruit from His plants. He knows exactly how to prepare the soil. His seeds are always good. His fertilizer is always effective. He knows exactly how to prune the plant. He never overwaters. He never forgets to water. God has never lost a plant.

My brother-in-law and sister-in-law are very good gardeners. Their garden isn't big, but they manage to produce a lot of food from it. In fact, one of their problems every year is that they have way too many vegetables, that they don't know what to do with them. To add to the list of reasons that God is a master gardener, let's remember that He never overplants. God never has too many plants producing too many fruit. He always has an intended purpose for someone else to enjoy the fruit that another of His is producing. So I say that not only is our fruit-bearing inevitable, but it's intentional.

Our growth is gradual, inevitable, intentional, and internal. While I've always mentioned this, let's remember that we grow because God has given us new life, and placed His Holy Spirit within us. I remind you again of John 15:5, where Jesus said, **"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."** We might see much fruit in the life of a tomato plant, but we need to remember that those fruit aren't the cause of life in that plant. It's always root, then fruit. Tomatoes are the inevitable end, the intended purpose of the plant, but tomatoes are the result of being attached to a life-giving plant. Let's always give glory to the God whom we are attached to, when we see the fruit of the Spirit manifest in our lives.

One final word that I'd like to say as we consider the growth in the life of believers beyond being gradual, inevitable, intentional, and internal, is symmetrical. By symmetrical, I don't mean that we are all the same version of each other. We are all different members of the same body, with various gifts and talents, working together to glorify Christ. So I don't mean that our gifts and talents in Christ are symmetrical. To be honest, the world around us has gifts and talents many times more than we do, and they are outside of Christ. You can have the ability to teach well, or build well, or work in the audio/video ministry, or tend to the children. Those are all various strengths, but they are not gifts that only Christians possess. When we are considering the symmetrical fruit of Christians, we are referring to the Fruit of the Spirit, as we will handle in this lesson. When it comes to that fruit, ALL Christians are supposed to look alike. In that respect, every Christian will look and act like their Father. There will be a family resemblance.

Taking all of this into consideration, let's unpack these six verses in Galatians, which contrasts two groups of people, and the marks that identify them. Let's begin by reading again, the deeds of the flesh, in verses 19-21. These deeds are true to varying degrees in all unredeemed humanity, and these deeds are still residual and waging war in the heart of the true Christian. As Pastor so often points out in his preaching, our biggest problem is always internal, never external. Jesus pointed out this truth in Mark 7:20-23, **"What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man,**

**come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."**

As we begin to break down the list of the works of the flesh, let's first point out the three categories that they break down into. The first category is sexual, "**sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality**", the second refers to religion, "**idolatry, sorcery**", the third category deals with human relationships, "**enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies**".

#### Category #1: Sexual sins

*Sexual Immorality.* We get the English word *pornography* from the Greek word used here. It's a very broad word that covers many sins under its umbrella. It certainly covers (but is not limited to) fornication, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, pedophilia, incest, prostitution, and the consuming of media and print images and video.

*Impurity.* It's not necessary to be seminary trained to understand what sexual impurity is. The word from the English viewpoint almost seems unnecessary, since it's logical that anyone who is sexually immoral would be impure. The Greek word however sheds more light on the subject. The word is *akatharsia*, which means "unclean". It was a word used in medical circles to refer to an open, infected, oozing wound. This infection would have made the person ceremonially unclean, and unable to carry on with normal worship to God until the infection had cleared, and the time for cleansing had taken place. The point behind the use of this word was to show how sexual sin infects our soul, makes us unclean, and breaks fellowship with God.

*Sensuality.* IOW, North America...incessantly. Sensuality takes the practice of sexual immorality, and takes all of the restraints off. It means that, not only do we practice whatever sexual it is, but we're open about it. We live it out in the open, we encourage others to not only accept, but promote it, and do it themselves. Sensuality dulls the senses of a people so much that what was once considered shocking, and not spoken of, is now considered to be common and normal.

#### Category #2: Religious Sins

*Idolatry.* This isn't just the archaic practice of bowing down before the golden image of a calf. If we think that we're innocent of idolatry because the only God we worship is the one true God, then we've missed the point of idolatry. Idolatry is the practice of worshipping anything man-made in the place of God. In 2019, that means our houses, cars, bank accounts, trinkets and gizmos, even other people. Basically, whatever controls your thoughts and actions is what you worship. What you spend the most time thinking about in the day is your god. Where you spend your money shows you what your god is. Make no mistake out this, all of life is lived according to your theology. Your life is lived rooted in proper theology, or it's lived rooted in your idolatrous religion.

*Sorcery.* Not the Wicked Witch of the west. Not limited to Ouija boards and occult practices. The Greek word is *pharmakeia*, from which we get the word "pharmacy" or "pharmaceutical". In ancient days, medicines were created that would alter the mind and emotion of a person and used for purpose of communicating with the gods. The word *pharmakeia* came to be closely related with witchcraft and magic. So certainly the word has to do with occult practices, but it also pertains to substance abuse, and the addiction and disaster of narcotics.

### Category #3: Relational Sins

*Enmity and Strife.* The ESV fails to translate that this word is written in the plural form. To have enmity towards someone is to actively be opposed to them. It's to be hostile towards someone, to antagonize them, to create friction with them, to carry one conflict and friction with them. The fact that this word is in the plural gives us the picture that this attitude isn't confined to one or two people in the life of this person, but that it's their general outlook at humanity.

*Jealousy.* The emotion of anger and resentment that we have towards people who have possessions, or positions, or even people in their life that we feel entitled and deserving to have.

*Fits of Anger.* We all know that hot head, the one with the short fuse that you walk on eggshells around. This term refers to the trait of flying off the handle about everything, all the time, for no reason.

*Rivalries/Dissensions/Divisions/Envy.* My family has just return recently from the Pigeon Forge, Tennessee area. In that town there is a dinner show called "The Hatfield and McCoy Dinner Show". It's a slapstick comedy show about a true-life feud that existed 150 years ago between two families along the West Virginia-Kentucky border. What began with one incident (not relevant for this study...google it) led to years of hatred and violence between these two families. People were born into a rivalry between sides, and carried on the legacy of hatred and division long after the initial wrong was done. This type of attitude only spreads far and wide and leads to more and more disaster. Many churches have split because of similar feuding and bickering amongst members, over one sin in the lives of two members.

*Drunkenness.* Like many other words on this list, drunkenness is a word that we understand rather simply. Christians and non-Christians alike see the danger and destruction that drunkenness has brought upon individuals and those around them. In a "sermon on the Mount" type of way, allow me to challenge your thinking on this point. Do you remember how Jesus clearly defined what murder and adultery were? I think many times we think we've kept the command to "not get drunk with wine", but yet we've missed the overarching point of the command.

The point goes beyond making sure we don't get out of control at our next get-together with friends. The point has to go with putting ourselves under the controlling influence of anything other than the Spirit. It's Paul's point in Ephesians 5:18, but allow me to expand its application. You can do the same thing with food. Food can be taken in moderation, or it can be abused, and the results on the body are also disastrous. Many illnesses and death are the direct result of the choices of food, and the amount of food that we eat. Food can quickly go from a necessity, to a controlling influence in our life, where we are constantly thinking about what to eat next.

What about money? We all need to make money to live. But how many have fallen into the pit of always needing to make more money. For many, they are drunk on money. Families are neglected, divorce is widespread. People aren't tending to the other areas of life that are important, because the only area that they devote attention to is the one where they make money.

I could come up with another three or four examples assuredly, but the point is simple to grasp. A desire (even a good and godly desire) becomes sin in our lives, when it becomes a ruling desire in our hearts. A mark of a the flesh is that it lets its desires in many areas of life consume them.

*Orgies*. This word has a special reference to pagan worship ceremonies that many of the Galatians once took part in before they came to Christ. But in our day and age, this word has reference to partying. And by partying, I mean the frequent gathering of individuals for the specific purpose of placing themselves under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, to inhibit all senses and conscience, and commit all sorts of wicked sin.

Paul ends his short list by writing “**and things like these**”, knowing that this list was not exhaustive. Sin was, and is, rampant. As believers, we need to closely examining our hearts to repent of all sin as we recognize it.

Next comes Paul’s warning, as he had warned them before, “**that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**” I’d ask at this point if anyone in this room has committed anything on the list that we’ve just gone through as we consider this warning from Paul, but I think we all realize how we’ve sinned against this list at some point in our lives. Paul’s warning has caused many believers in Christ to doubt the validity of their salvation, not because they committed these sins before coming to Christ, but that they struggle with them since coming to Christ.

The key word in the verse (which is lost in the ESV translation) is the word “practice”. The ESV translates the word *prasso* as “do”. In the ESV, it sounds cut and dry, “if you do this sin, you will not enter the kingdom of God”, but the word is ‘practice’, “If you practice this sin.” Paul doesn’t mean ‘practice’ like a kid practices awkwardly hitting a baseball, or riding a skateboard. He means ‘practice’ like a doctor practices medicine, or a lawyer practices law. IOW, its what you do everyday of your life. The word ‘practice’ indicates effort to do something constantly and ongoing over a long period of time. It speaks of doing something so often that it becomes nearly second-nature to do it. A mark of a Christian is not that they never sin again, but that the pattern and consistency of their live is one that is no longer dominated and controlled by sin. Look into your heart, is your life dominated by the flesh? Than this warning is for you, but this warning is not to discourage you from all hope. This warning to is encourage you that there is hope. Those who practice these things will not inherit the kingdom, but there is a God who can change your character, who can strengthen you and cause you to overcome sin and be righteous before Him. The command is to walk by the Spirit. Consider [1 John 3:4-10](#).

### The Fruit of the Spirit

Verse 22-23, “**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.**”

The works of the flesh are the natural fruit that come from the sinful seed within every person, but the fruit of the Spirit is what blossoms in every regenerate person who is Spirit-indwelt. There is a contrast within the two lists as to the degree by which both are produced. As we looked at the first list, there are items on the list that pertain to us, and some that don’t. Some Christians struggle with more items than others, but no one breaks the entire list, there isn’t enough time in a day to break the whole thing. But not so with the fruit of the Spirit. When the Spirit is at work in a believer, the Spirit applies the entire list. We can further pick up when we notice how the “works” of the flesh is plural, yet the “fruit” of the Spirit is singular. There are many ‘works’, all people are hit-or-miss on that list. But there is only one ‘fruit’, and it tastes the same in every believer. Some Christian produce big and juicy strawberries in their life, while other Christians produce the same strawberries as Walmart does (very tiny and kinda mushy already), but every true believer will produce the same fruit.

*Love.* The first fruit on the list is love, and this lesson could literally be 80 pages long unpacking this word, so I'll try to avoid that by boiling this down to a few necessary words. To begin, let's understand that there are four Greek words by which we could get an English translation of 'love', but the word that Paul used is *Agape*. True *agape* love is one that is brought about in the heart by the Holy Spirit. It's the attitude of choosing to love someone, and serving them, seeking their good, and best interests in everything. *Agape* love is the complete other side of the coin when we think of how the world loves. Marriages many times end quicker than the first mortgage term because they "fell out of love". When asked what that means, the definition is about not feeling loved and appreciated, not having their needs met. That's how sinful human nature loves. It's more than "what can you give me?" It's "what have you given me lately?" Sinful nature is always self-centered. "I love you because you make me feel like \_\_\_\_\_." "I love how you treat me. I love how romantic you are. I love how you love what I love." And as soon as these feelings diminish, so does the love, and everyone is back to finding the next flame who will meet their needs again.

*Agape* love is selfless. It's a tireless love that is sacrificial. It's a love that chooses to put another first, even when that person is completely underserving of it. IOW, it's the love of Christ, it's the love of God. The Father loved His people so much, that He sent His Son to live a perfect life, and die a brutal death, to propitiate His wrath towards us and save us. Christ came to earth as a servant. He served the very people who hated him. Christ put aside His glory in Heaven, came to earth in the humblest of means, lived a common life, and served the very people who mocked him. Christ is the very example to us of how to love one another. This is the fruit of love that the Spirit brings to life in every believer.

*Joy.* I feel like I've given the definition of joy a hundred times in this class, but let's do it again briefly. 'Joy' is not 'happiness'. Lots of people (Christian and non-Christian) are happy. But only the Christian can experience true and lasting joy. Happiness is momentary. Happiness is also circumstantial. Happiness is like a blue sky on a warm day, but rain will come, and there's nothing you can do about it. Joy however is static. Once you have joy, that joy cannot be removed. The unsaved individual may find joy in a marriage, or a career, but the problem with those long-standing pleasures is that they come to an end. Anything this side of heaven will someday be taken from us. Naked we came into the world, and naked we will go. But for the Christian who knows and loves God, the joy of knowing Christ as Lord and Saviour will never end in this life, or the next. The joy that comes from being a child of the King is the only true joy there is. This is the fruit of joy that the Spirit brings to life in every believer.

*Peace.* We live in a world that is anxious about everything. Especially over the last year, I keep hearing more and more people talk about how they battle anxiety. Perhaps the world *is* more anxious now than ever before, or perhaps this is just the recent psychological trend in 2019. We as people tend to worry about life. I am a worrier by sinful nature. Even when life seems good, and there's little to fret over, my mind wants to invent future things to worry about. But there is a peace that comes to the believer. We are not alone. The Christian is a child of the Sovereign Ruler of the universe. How comforting it is to know that **"the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose"** (Rom. 8:27-28) Our God is in control, and more than that, He loves us and wants the best for us. Everything that happens in our life, happens according to His plan, by His permission, for our ultimate good and for His glory. So we can have peace. We can rest in the perfect wisdom of our God in all things. This is the fruit of peace that the Spirit brings to life in every believer.

*Patience.* It's a word that we understand well, and it's an attribute that we see in non-Christians many times. So what makes patience a fruit of the Spirit? I think we can answer this by remembering the gospel of Christ. Consider the patience of God shown to us as He endured our years of sinning against Him. Consider how patient He was to not only endure the suffering He felt by our sinful living, but choosing to love us in spite of our sin. Even today, consider the patience of God towards us as we slowly progress in Christlikeness. Consider the patience of our God to hold back His wrath from this wicked world where we live. This world is busy trying to outdo itself in sin, and yet our God allows people another day to repent and turn to Him. Our God is a patient God who is slow to anger. (Ps. 86:15) Of course there will come a day when Christ will judge the wicked, but until that day, we live in a time of God's patience.

In exactly the same way, we are imitate the patience of God in our lives. Are our children irritating us? Then remember the patience of God shown to us. We have irritated God a zillion times more than our child has irritated us, and yet He still loves and cares for us. So we show patience to people in our lives when they are slow to grow in Christlikeness. And we show patience to the people who mock, and sometimes hurt us for our faith in Christ, knowing that Christ is our example of patience in suffering. Without the example of Christ, and the indwelling Spirit giving us the strength to endure, we would not know or exemplify Christlike patience. This is the fruit of patience that the Spirit bring to life in every believer.

*Kindness.* Once again, true kindness is exemplified by the life of Christ, and empowered in us through the Holy Spirit. True kindness is an act that is done for another person, so much even that it puts me in a vulnerable position. It's the attitude of pouring myself into another person for there good so much, that I actually leave myself in the position of being hurt by them. It's being willing to go into difficult places and practically help someone with your guard down. It's being willing to get your hands dirty, and expecting to thanks or praise in return from that person, or anyone else for that matter.

Sometimes, we do kind things to other people to make ourselves feel good. We sleep better knowing what we did. We feel like we've pleased others, or God. Sometimes we may show kindness to others, knowing that they're going to owe us some day themselves. These motivations aren't kindness at all. True kindness is exemplified in Christ, who deeply cared for people, and helped them when He knew there was no way that they could repay Him. Loving even the unlovable, especially when you know they can't love you back, that is kindness. This is the fruit of kindness that the Spirit brings to life in every believer.

*Goodness.* Another word that could have been used here is 'integrity'. IOW, the person that you are on Sunday morning, that's the person you ought to be on Friday night. To be 'good' is be known by others to be someone with moral and spiritual excellence. Not perfection, but excellence. Paul will exhort the Galatian just a few verses from now in 6:10, **"So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."** Only the Christian can live with even an inkling of spiritual excellence. The is the fruit of goodness that the Spirit bring to life in every believer.

*Faithfulness.* As a sports fan, every once in awhile I find myself in a conversation with someone, and we commend the 1% of athletes who play their entire careers with one organization (sometimes with little success). That's an attribute of faithfulness. It's what we also call loyalty. We see it in our world today in the corporate world, watching people retire from a job after decades of service. But if you've been

following the pattern, you might have guessed that the Spirit brings a fruit to our lives that goes far beyond what the world does by comparison. Our world many times is faithful only during the good times. But we see how Christ was faithful to God during even the hardest times of His life, right to His death on the cross. Our world is many times faithful, so long as they receive what they perceive to be beneficial and appropriate in the end. Christ was faithful when what He received was the greatest injustice the world has even known. The world faithfully loves its own by closing its eyes to the sins of one another, and accepting one another as they are. God faithfully loves us by surgically removing our heart of stone, and replacing it with our heart of flesh. God never leaves us stranded in sin, but He's faithful to grow us along the way into Christlikeness.

True faithfulness creates a trustworthiness. Because we trust God, we believe what He says He will do. We believe His promises to us for today, and we believe that He will return again. A believer will be one who is marked as one who is trustworthy and faithful to God. As a result, we will faithfully serve one another, and be committed to build one another up in the faith. This is the fruit of faithfulness that the Spirit brings to life in every believer.

*Gentleness.* Other words that we might use for this are 'humility' or 'self-forgetfulness'. The believer is one who humbly accepts what God gives to them in this life. Sometimes God gives us sunshine, and sometimes He gives us severe thunderstorms, but we recognize that God is good, and faithful, and just, through it all. To be gentle is to be meek (not weak). The gentle heart brought about by the Holy Spirit is one that will submit itself to the will of God, and remain teachable all the days of its life. The gentle spirit will consider others of more value than itself. This characteristic is one that can only truly be found in one who is Spirit indwelt. This is the fruit of gentleness that the Spirit brings to life in every believer.

*Self-Control.* To be self-controlled is to be able to restrain yourself from fulfilling your sinful appetite. But it is more than that. It is to discipline our body so much that we do what pleases the Lord first in our life. Jesus Christ (who had no sin nature), was the perfect example of self-control. Jesus always said and did everything that was consistent with His Father's will, and His divine nature. To be self-controlled is the ability to pursue what is important in life, rather than to always be impulsive. The strength that is required to overcome our own impulses, and remain eyes-locked upon Christ, comes only from the Holy Spirit of God. This is the fruit of self-control that the Spirit brings to life in every believer.

In Summary: These collectively are the fruit of the Spirit. You cannot have one without the other. They exist together as one fruit. They may blossom to different degrees in people. Some may bear more fruit, or bear fruit more quickly than others, but all true Christians will bear this fruit. It is this fruit that shows believers and unbelievers alike who is truly a Christian. The fruit of the Spirit no less makes a Christian than a strawberry makes a strawberry plant. But a strawberry plant incapable of bearing strawberries is one that you rip out and toss into the yard-waste bag. So fruit has nothing to do with justification, but it is a mark that justification has happened. Because of what Christ has done, and what Holy Spirit is doing, fruit happens.

Verse 23 ends, "**against such things there is no law.**" Quite simply, everyone knows that the character traits recorded in the fruit of the Spirit are good and godly traits. There's no law against those things, everyone would agree that they are right. No one would look upon someone who loved, had joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, and determine that they need counseling or rehabilitation of some sort.



Now that we have spent quite some time outlining the contrast between the works of the flesh, and the fruit of the Spirit, let us quickly talk about the Conquest of God over our sin nature, allowing us to walk with God. Verses 24-25,

**“And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.”**

What does Paul mean when he says that all in Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires? Crucifixion brought death, which brought finality. The last I checked, my body with its sinful passions and desires was still alive and waging war in heart. So how is it crucified?

First of all, Paul isn't talking about the actual, complete, and present state of our crucified flesh or the last eight pages of our notes made no sense. If there wasn't a fight, we wouldn't need the last two lessons encouraging us to walk by the Spirit and not according to our flesh. The best way to understand this verse is to see that our flesh *was* crucified to the cross of Christ. This verse is looking backwards to the accomplishment of Christ. Our passions and desires *are* dead in the sense that they have no swaying power of us any longer. MacArthur likens our present sinful passions and desires as to a chicken running around with its head cut off! The flesh has had its death blow already, the nerves may still be firing, but soon enough the body will fall down. Because the power of sin has been broken, and the Spirit of God is alive in us, we are to live by the Spirit. We are to keep in step with the Spirit.

According to Phil Ryken, there are two sides to sanctification: mortification, and vivification. Mortification actively chokes the lifeblood out of sin, while vivification is the coming to life of the fruit of the Spirit. Both are happen simultaneously in the life of a believer. Both are the work of the Holy Spirit. Paul said earlier in Galatians 3:3, **“Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”** The Galatians believed the gospel, they saw the work of God in their justification, and then they resumed walking in the power of their flesh. Paul's command (then and now) is for believers to keep in step with the Spirit. It's a military term used of marching in an orderly fashion. It's the idea of keeping alert at all times, and being ready to take the order from the commanding officer. The soldier many times is kept in the dark as to the bigger picture in the battle. The only thing they need to know is to trust the one who ranks above them and to obey.

Not only does this understanding of 'keeping in step' help us to understand our close proximity to God in battle, and help us to trust and obey him, it also helps us to understand our role as a soldier. Never in the history of earth has an army consisted of one soldier. We aren't fighting alone. We have brothers and sisters neck-deep in the fight all around us. This isn't the time for pushing and fighting and bickering with our brothers and sisters as Paul warned in 5:26. This is the time for staying in formation, maintaining a spirit of unity, and ensuring that no man is left behind in the battle. So let us walk by the Spirit, and put to death the works of the flesh.