

## **Galatians 6 (8) – Which Way Are You Trending?**

Intro: spotting trends: retail (what's the hot new toy this season, hairstyles, cars, etc.?) Trends are measured in the stock market, sports teams, and we often think of our relationships or feelings in terms of trends (The question, "How is it going?" is answered by the current trend).

The Bible talks a lot about trending. Jesus spoke of trending in John 8:31-32 and Mark 4:26-28. In this message we will look at 4 texts that show a progression toward or away from godliness. These are connected but we have broken them into specific categories or areas in order to enhance our understanding. This will give you a practical guide to discover the patterns in your life. If you can find out where the problems are, you can take practical steps to be able to lead a more useful, faithful, worshipful, and obedient life.

Many times we don't understand how we are being influenced, but if we do get a handle on this, we can begin to take control of our situations. It is when we don't think we ever need to take stock of where we are or that we don't need to keep an eye on where we are going, this is a problem, and we start trending the wrong way. When we don't believe we can be deceived, that's when we already are.

The truth is that we can get caught in a spiritual holding pattern; we don't seem to be advancing in our spiritual life. What we need to do is to find the source of our spiritual inertia, so we can get moving forward in faith again. If you can find the problem areas in your life, you can extricate yourself from the bad, and integrate yourself into the good. You see the way we get into trouble, but also you see the way out, you can reverse the trend, turn the tide, and repent with practice. We can process our practice rightly, and start trending in the right direction.

Sometimes we may not realize it but we choose to lose. What we will discover today is like a road map, and we may think our case is special somehow, but it isn't. This is a summarization of the Word of God on this subject.

As we examine these texts, let's remember our understanding of how we grow in grace, how we become more sanctified in practice.

- Here is the standard
- We don't meet the standard
- Jesus meets the standard, and He meets it for us
- Now we thank Jesus for that and we study Him, we worship Him (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)
- We can now strive after the standard as an act of worship
- We will not meet it, but we continue in faith that He has met it for us, we follow Him

### **The Principle** – Galatians 6:8

Current events: what is happening right now?

Current trend: what are you plugging into? (The *current*, the power, the source)

*For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption*

- it decays, deteriorates in value; it starts bad and gets worse, you loom large

*But the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life*

- it appreciates in value, heaven come to earth, Jesus living big in and through us (Galatians 4:19), the fruit of the Spirit

Current events: what is happening right now?

Current trend: what are you plugging into? (The *current*, the power, the source)

The Bible teaches that spiritual growth and change is more process oriented than crisis oriented. Certainly there are times when we have a moment of change, but while a breakthrough is wonderful, the follow through is necessary. We can turn from our sin and turn to God at any time, and this is a wonderful promise (1 John 1:9). We can draw near to God and He will draw near to us (James 4:7-8). The problem is that we turn but we don't trend.

### **The Progression**

Thought Life – James 1:14-15 – progression – enticed (own desire), ensnared (lured, dragged away), enslaved (gives birth to sin), endorsed (it brings forth death) – we are lured away, then caught up, we do the thing, and then we die for it (and willingly). The world feeds it, the devil enflames it, the flesh indulges it. If you dwell on a thought the thought dwells in you.

Social Life – Psalm 1:1 – “Walk – stand – sit” is a sequence that pictures a progression from a careless association with the wicked to complete identification with them. 1 John 1:6 – *If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.*

Work Life – Ephesians 4:28 – ascending nature – progression of stealing from others to supporting others. We are here to be a channel for the resources God gives us, to be a conduit of His blessings, not a dead end. Colossians 3:23-24 – the proper perspective (*Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.*)

This is putting our model of Galatians 2:20 into practice, faithful living based in grace. Living in grace doesn't mean we are spiritually lazy, it means we are taught to trust and treasure God, and we follow Christ by faith as an act of worship.

*I have been crucified with Christ (past / justification). It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me (present / sanctification). And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God (present / sanctification), who loved me and gave himself for me (past / justification).*

We remind ourselves of this truth, we renew our minds around this truth, we repent towards this truth, and we rest in this truth.