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# Galatians

**And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**  
Galatians 5:24

Here we have a truth which is sometimes hard for us to understand as we continue to walk in this fallen world. Paul has just given a list of the works of the flesh and then a list of the fruits of the Spirit. He now states that "those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." This is given to show the difference between the carnal man and the regenerate man. He explains this in great detail in Romans 6. In part, his words from Romans 6 state -

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? <sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup> For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness of His* resurrection, <sup>6</sup> knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. <sup>7</sup> For he who has died has been freed from sin." Romans 6:1-7

Paul is saying that through Christ, we are dead to the law. As the law is what brings about the knowledge of sin, and as we have overcome the law through Christ's fulfillment of it, then we have "been freed from sin." If we are free from sin, then we should live in that freedom. The passions and desires which are aroused by the knowledge of the law are crucified with Christ. Because of this, we have the ability to bear the fruits of the Spirit instead of remaining in the works of the flesh.

Life application: Because Christ has overcome through the fulfillment of the law, and because of our position in Him, then let us live for Christ. If the passions and desires of the flesh return to our minds, let us look again to the cross, understanding that we are freed from their grasp. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus.

**If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.** Galatians 5:25

Paul's words here show that those who have received Christ now live in a different way than they did before receiving Him. Before we lived in the flesh; now we live by the Spirit. The word "by" seems to be a better translation of the Greek as it more properly shows the divide between the old life and the new. And so, "If we live [by] the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." It is an indication that we can, in fact, be saved and yet not live according to the manner in which we were called.

Instead of acting as if we are dead to sin because we have moved to Christ who fulfilled the law for us, we continue to live in sin. Paul now shows us that this is not the proper way to conduct ourselves.

Interestingly, he uses a completely different word for "walk" than that which he used in verse 5:16. There the word was used in an ethical sense. It was intended to show the conduct of our life. In this verse, he uses a word which means to walk

in line as if in strict accordance to a particular pace. If we think of “keeping in step,” or “walking in cadence,” we get the idea of what Paul means. He uses the same word in a graphic way in Romans 4:12 concerning our following in the steps of Abraham. Paul is asking us to walk in cadence with the leading of the Spirit and not be diverted from that sound and reasonable path.

Life application: If one is in a military unit, he is expected to march according to the steps of that unit. It would be contrary to the discipline of the formation for everyone to walk to the beat of their own desires. Such is the case with walking in step with the Spirit. It is contrary to walk according to the works of the flesh when we have been called to walk in step with the Spirit.

**Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.**

Galatians 5:26

Paul’s admonition here is correctly translated by the NKJV in using the word “become.” He is not saying that they are any of these things, but they are to be careful to not become any of these things. The reason must be attributed to the false teachings of the Judaizers. They crept in and had taught their destructive heresy concerning inserting deeds of the law in order to be justified. In so doing, it would naturally lead to each of these things, just as it did among the Jews where there was always a subtle competition as to who was the most pious because of their deeds of the flesh.

Paul’s warning then has been to put away works of the flesh and to trust in the work of Christ. In so doing, they would not become “conceited.” The Greek word gives exactly this idea. It speaks of empty glory, self-deluded conceit which is motivated by “delusions of grandeur,” and boasting in what there is absolutely nothing to boast about. When one is under grace and knows it, then there is no reason at all to act in this way. The boasting one would exhibit would be in the One who bestowed the grace; not in self (see Galatians 6:14).

The words “provoking one another” are given next because one who is boastful about himself will naturally provoke those around them. In their supposed superiority, they will be haughty and arrogant and look down on those around them. On the contrary, when one understands the grace which has been bestowed upon them, then they should naturally look at others as on an equal footing. Christians all belong to the same family and they will all share in the same blessing because of their adoption by God. And so what is there to boast in? And with nothing to boast in, there will be no reason to provoke those around them.

Likewise, Paul says that they should not be “envying one another.” It would make no sense for someone to envy someone else who has received exactly the same blessing as they did. Grace is unmerited favor. To envy someone else’s grace is illogical.

Many scholars look at Paul’s words of this verse in merely a societal context, attributing it to wealth, position, status, or possessions. It is true that we shouldn’t either boast in these things, or be envious of others who have these things. However, Paul’s words here must be kept in context. He has been speaking of deeds of the flesh contrasting fruits of the Spirit. Therefore, his words are preeminently referring to spiritual matters and life in Christ.

Life application: Let us never assume that the fruits of the Spirit that we possess somehow make us better than those around us. Further, let us never be envious of someone who has a very strong and vital ministry or ability within the body. Each of us was saved by grace, and each of us has gifts of the Spirit which have been given according to the wisdom of God. The best thing we can do is to cultivate those gifts which we have been given, and do so to His glory.

**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.** Galatians 6:1

Paul's letter to the Galatians now reaches its final chapter with words of admonition which are immensely valuable to pay heed to. He begins with the word "Brethren..." in order to set the tone. He is speaking to his beloved brethren in Galatia, but his words include even us today who are a part of the same body. The heartfelt nature of the address is intended to elicit continued harmony. As he is speaking to fellow Christians, the words imply that the action they are to take also involves fellow Christians.

It is in this context that he says, "...if a man is overtaken in any trespass." The idea of being overtaken does not include someone who is living in sin, or is prone to returning to some old sin. In such a case, that person is to be properly disciplined, rebuked, or even ex-communicated. For such a one, the circumstance would dictate the punishment. Rather, this is speaking of another brother who simply falls into some sort of temptation and fails to resist it.

At such a time, Paul tells them that, "...you who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness." The one who is spiritual is speaking of the one who is guided by the Spirit of God. His conduct is explained in Galatians 5:16-18 and defined by the fruits mentioned in Galatians 5:22-25. One of those fruits is actually referred to by Paul now; gentleness. As the individual is guided by the Spirit, they should possess that fruit in some measure. Paul asks them (and thus us) to depend on this trait when dealing with such a brother.

There is an especially important reason for this too. We should each carefully consider ourselves lest we also become tempted. In other words, none of us are above falling into temptation. If we harshly treat a brother who has been overcome by sin, when our time inevitably comes, there will be at least two repercussions that we will face for that harsh treatment:

- 1) We will be disgraced because of our own haughty attitude. Our arrogance will be on more prominent display.

- 2) We may receive the same treatment from our fallen brother because of the sad precedent we set.

Paul, always thinking ahead, wants to preempt the pain and suffering that comes from unclear reasoning concerning our state as Christians.

Life application: If we harshly treat a brother who has fallen, we may very well ruin a friendship for no good reason. How much better it is to empathize with other's failings and do our best to maintain sound and friendly relations with those around us who have called on Christ.

**Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.** Galatians 6:2

In this verse, the stress is on the words "one another's." Paul is highlighting the mutual relationship which was noted in the previous verse. When a brother falls, we should be there to gently restore them, just as they will – most probably – have to gently restore us when we face temptation and fail. When they are weak, we are to be strong; when we fall, they are to be there to restore us to a right walk. Paul noted this in the book of Romans as well –

"We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves." Romans 15:1

This is what we are called to do because Christ Himself first bore our burdens. Further, as our High Priest, He continues to bear our failings before the Father, making intercession for us. It is in our acting in this manner of bearing one another's burdens that Paul says we will "so fulfill the law of Christ." The law of Christ is superior to the Law of Moses in this regard. The Law of Moses was of stern discipline; the law of Christ is that of grace and mercy.

The display of these attributes results in love for one another. And this is exactly what Christ commanded us to observe –

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:3, 35

Life application: It is incumbent on us to restore those around us who demonstrate failings in their Christian walk. In our bearing their burdens, the law of Christ finds its fullness in such dealings with one another.

**For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.** Galatians 6:3

This verse bears directly on the previous verse which said, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

The person who is unwilling to help a brother who has slipped to get back on the proper path is just a human as well. In his looking down on the fallen brother in contempt or accusation, he is demonstrating that he “thinks himself to be something.” In essence, “How could you allow this deplorable sin into your life. I would never!” Such a person, acting in his haughty and arrogant manner, is no better than the one he is accusing. He thinks the fallen brother is nothing, but this just proves that “he is nothing” also.

We as humans tend to put a high value on ourselves, but in this we are only deceived. We all get up and put our pants on one leg at a time. We are all growing older; we will all die. We are not special or unique out of all of the human race, and so we need to recognize it. When our fall does come, we will inevitably get our comeuppance for the arrogance we display towards others. For this reason,

let us not think too highly of ourselves, but rather let us empathize with those who fall into various sorts of sin; leading them lovingly back to restoration.

Life application: Humility in the present will generally be rewarded with kindness in the future.