

The Leading of the Spirit

Galatians 5:18

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All emphasis added are mine

Galatians 5:16-26 *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.*

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

led – to lead, bring, drive, or carry (present tense – denoting continuous action)

We cannot underestimate or overestimate what Paul is saying:

- Not merely to guide or suggest (Spirit is not passive).
 - **John 16:13** *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.*
- Not draw or drag (believer is not passive).
 - **John 6:44** *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.*

Other uses -

- **1 Corinthians 12:2** *You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led.*
- **Matthew 21:7** *They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them.*
- **Luke 22:54** *Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house, and Peter was following at a distance.*

Outline

The Leading of the Spirit

1. Whom does the Spirit lead?
2. How does the Spirit lead?
3. Where does the Spirit lead?

Whom does the Spirit lead?

- **Galatians 3:2-3** *Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?*
- **Galatians 4:29** *But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now.*
- **Romans 8:14** *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.*
- Paul makes it clear that it is Christians and only Christians – sons and daughters of God - who have the Spirit and are led by the Spirit.

How does the Spirit lead?

2 Peter 1:21 *For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

- The Holy Spirit has provided us with a book of God's words and commands.

The Spirit doesn't replace God's Word and God's Law. Instead, the Spirit changes our relationship with God's Word and God's Law.

- **Ezekiel 36:26-27** *And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*

How does the Spirit lead?

- **Jeremiah 31:31-33** *“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. 33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*
- **1 John 5:3** *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.*

How does the Spirit lead?

We ought to be able to sing with the Psalmist, and say with Paul and Jesus:

- **Psalms 119:33-35** *Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes; and I will keep it to the end. 34 Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart. 35 Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.*
- **Romans 7:12** *So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.*
- **John 17:17** *Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.*

How does the Spirit lead?

“But the true way to honor the Holy Spirit as our guide is to honor the holy Scriptures through which he guides us. The fundamental guidance which God gives to shape our lives—the instilling, that is, of the basic convictions, attitudes, ideals and value judgments, in terms of which we are to live—is not a matter of inward promptings apart from the Word but of the pressure on our consciences of the portrayal of God’s character and will in the Word, which the Spirit enlightens us to understand and apply to ourselves.” J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*

How does the Spirit lead?

- **Philippians 2:12-13** *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*
- God has given the means of grace to work out our salvation, but it is the Holy Spirit working in you, empowering you, and producing fruit in you.
- “It is his [the Holy Spirit's] part to keep us in the path and to bring us at length to the goal. But it is we who tread every step of the way; our limbs that grow weary with the labor; our hearts that faint, our courage that fails—our faith that revives our sinking strength, our hope that instills new courage into our souls—as we toil over the steep ascent” B.B. Warfield

Where does the Spirit lead?

v18...you are not under the law.

What does it mean to be under the law?

- To be under a curse (3:10).
- To be in need of justification (3:11).
- To be in need of faith (3:12).
- To be in need of the promised Spirit (3:14).
- To be imprisoned under sin (3:22).
- To be under a guardian (3:25).
- To be enslaved to the elementary principles of the world (4:3).
- To be in need of redemption (4:5).

Where does the Spirit lead?

The Galatians had been freed from the law in Christ, but were now looking to return to it for their justification by keeping the Jewish calendar and were well on their way to circumcision.

- **Acts 15:1** *But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”*

Complementary purposes of the law and the promise -

Galatians 3:19-21 *Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. 20 Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one. 21 Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law.*

Where does the Spirit lead?

Being led by the Spirit is not a guarantee of a trouble free life.

- **Acts 20:22-23** *And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.*

“You be led by the Spirit, - if you act under the guidance and government of the Holy Spirit and of that spiritual nature and disposition he has wrought in you, - if you make the word of God your rule and the grace of God your principle, - it will hence appear that you are not under the law, not under the condemning, though you are still under the commanding, power of it; for there is now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; and as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God,” Matthew Henry

Where does the Spirit lead?

Promises when we don't follow God's perceptive will:

- **Romans 8:28-29** *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*
- **Romans 8:1** *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*