

# BOOK OF GALATIANS

## *“The Spirit against the Flesh”*

Scripture Reading: GALATIANS 5:16-18

- ) **SLIDES 1-6**. Bible Jeopardy!
- ) **SLIDES 7**. Read today’s Scripture text.
- ) **SLIDE 8**. Today we continue in our expository study of the Book of GALATIANS. This is message #37. I have titled today’s message *“The Spirit against the Flesh”* (v17).
- ) Starting in v13, the apostle Paul gets to the practicality of this letter. How does a degenerate unbeliever act once truly saved by God? We covered some of that answer in our last time together by saying that the believer will show love towards one another. They will serve through love.
- ) And now as we move forward into v16-18, we see that serving through love may not be as easy as we think. Let’s look at two words this morning (Spirit and flesh) and learn why Paul had to write about these two words to the Galatians (and us).
- ) **SLIDE 9**. First, let’s talk about the flesh. What does Paul mean when he talks about the flesh? In the Biblical sense, when Paul speaks of the flesh, he is speaking of our natural sin tendencies. The flesh is our human condition.
- ) **SLIDE 10**. Paul says this about the flesh in EPH 2:1-3. In this text Paul is telling the believers at Ephesus that before they were saved, they only wanted to satisfy the lusts of the flesh and the desires of the flesh. They wanted only to please self. And this applies to every human being including us.
- ) And because of this, the Ephesians (and us) were dead in those trespasses and children of wrath. What wrath? Who’s wrath? God’s wrath. The wages of sin is what? Death.

- ) So, in the Biblical sense, the flesh IS the human condition. We want to sin. We enjoy sinning. We love to sin. Sinning is fun.
- ) **SLIDE 11**. Paul says this in ROMANS 7:14-15. Paul admits that because of his human condition, his flesh, he continues to do the things he does not want to do. He continues to sin.
- ) **SLIDE 12**. Our human condition and the flesh and this sin problem we have does not **DISAPPEAR** when we get saved. Don't expect to be perfect once you are saved and don't expect others to be perfect either when they get saved. The apostle Paul wasn't, and we won't be either.
- ) We have defined the flesh. We all have what theologians call a bent towards sin. Now let's move on to the Spirit.
- ) **SLIDE 13**. JOHN 14:16-17. This is the night before Jesus dies. He will be going away. But He promises the Spirit of God to these disciples and ultimately to all believers. Jesus says that the Spirit is with us and within us.
- ) **SLIDE 14**. EPHESIANS 1:13-14. When a person hears the gospel message and believes the gospel message of Jesus Christ, he/she receives Christ and, at that moment, is sealed by the Holy Spirit. And this Spirit is a guarantee of our salvation.
- ) **SLIDE 15**. Every born-again **BELIEVER** has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And this Spirit guarantees our inheritance.
- ) **SLIDE 16**. ROMANS 8:9. Here the apostle Paul lays out the test. If you truly have received Christ, you truly have the Holy Spirit. If you didn't receive Christ, if you are still an unbeliever dead in your sins, then you do not have the Holy Spirit.
- ) So, let's summarize what we have learned so far. Every human being has the flesh, the human condition, the desire to sin. This does not go away once a person becomes a believer. However, only the believer has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

- ) Beware! There are false theologies out there, particularly very popular in Pentecostal circles, that will tell you that the Holy Spirit does not indwell every believer.
- ) They will say that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a second act of grace which they call the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And one must speak in tongues and be some sort of super Christian to have this baptism of the Spirit. This is not true. This is bad theology. Every believer has the Holy Spirit.
- ) Before we became believers in Christ, we enjoyed the desires and lusts of the flesh. There were no battles going on within us. Sure, there may have been some guilty feelings for doing or saying the wrong thing, but never any heavy conviction.
- ) **SLIDE 17.** But for the believer, a battle has begun. GAL 5:17. The flesh is against the Spirit and the Spirit is against the flesh.
- ) **SLIDE 18.** *“So that you may not do the things that you please.”* This is a very interesting line. The things that please us work both ways. The flesh continues with its desires (sin), but the Spirit wants to shut that down. The Spirit continues with its desires (good works), but the flesh wants to shut that down.
- ) I want to spend the remainder of our time this morning talking about the Holy Spirit and His influence in the life of the believer.
- ) I have a portable GARMIN GPS device in my car. GPS stands for Global Positioning Satellite. I enter the address of the place I want to go into my GPS device. Once I press “GO” the device tells me when I’m going to turn, what lane to get into, which way to turn, how fast I am driving, and how many more miles till I arrive at my destination. And it does all this while displaying a real time map on the display.
- ) The device works by communicating with satellites that are orbiting the earth, which in turn feeds my GARMIN with all the necessary information to get me correctly to my destination. The technology is absolutely incredible.

- ) If the device tells you to turn right and you decide to go straight, a friendly female voice from the device comes back and says, “*recalculating*” which makes you feel like you have just performed the most ridiculous driving decision ever.
- ) The bottom line is this: this GPS device knows how to get you where you need to go.
- ) **SLIDE 19.** There’s another GPS system whose function is similar to the one we use in a car. This GPS stands for God’s Providing Spirit that resides inside every believer.
- ) And His function is similar to the one in your car. His function is to get you where you need to go, not on a physical plain but on a Spiritual plain. His job is to sanctify you—to gradually and daily mold you into the image of Jesus Christ.
- ) **SLIDE 20.** So, what do the Scriptures tell us to do with this Holy Spirit? GALATIANS 5:16. Bring up the “*I*” factor.
- ) **SLIDE 21.** To win the battle between the flesh and the Spirit, we are **COMMANDED** to walk by the Spirit.
- ) Both the KJV and the NASB Bible translations say, “*walk in or walk by the Spirit.*” It’s not a suggestion. It’s a command. It’s a daily routine. It’s the lifestyle of the believer.
- ) And let’s remember that every believer has God’s Providing Spirit dwelling inside him or her regardless of how long you have been a believer. We often say that a person failed in a sinful situation because he or she is a new believer. New believers have the same resources as seasoned believers.
- ) And there needs to be a balance between the Holy Spirit and human effort to fulfill this command. If we let it all up to God to win this battle, we wouldn’t need the command to “*walk by the Spirit.*” And if it were all up to us to win this battle, we wouldn’t need God’s help. I promise you that if we do our part (human effort), God will do His part.

- ) When we become a new creation in Christ, it is at that point in time that the real conflict or battle begins within us. The sinful nature doesn't go away. Sin wants to regain its position as our master, and it will fight relentlessly against the Spirit for control.
- ) Have you ever felt this battle within you?
- ) The GPS device in my car is telling me where to go at all times. When to turn left. When to turn right. How does it know this? It has a constant link with the GPS satellites out there in the sky somewhere and they communicate the path and the decisions for me so I can correctly arrive at my destination.
- ) **SLIDE 22.** Likewise, the Holy Spirit knows our destination and is in constant communication with the Father. 1COR 2:10-11.
- ) So, the question is, are we listening and being obedient to our built-in believer GPS system or do we keep on making it say, "*recalculating?*"
- ) Yes, for the believer, there is a battle within us, and I assure you the more we desire holiness and the more we desire a closer walk with the Lord, the greater this battle will become. But thanks be to God! We have the Spirit of God (God's Providing Spirit) dwelling within us to guide us always down the path of righteousness.

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