

Galatians 5:16–26

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1. What does it mean to “walk in the Spirit”?

- “Walk...” PERIPATEO is never used by Paul literally. It is always a figure for a manner of life (Romans 6:4; 8:1, 4; Ephesians 2:10, 4:1, 17; 1 Corinthians 3:3).
- “In the Spirit...” Paul uses “in the Spirit” to signify the direction of that manner of life. So, he describes it as walking, desiring, being led, bearing fruit, lining up with. This “walk in the Spirit” is faith working by love in service to one another (5:5, 13)
- “And ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh...” Those walking in the Spirit cannot fulfill the desires of the flesh (5:13–17); this person is has crucified the flesh (5:26).

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2. Explain how and why “the flesh” is contrary to “the Spirit”?
- “None otherwise minded...” in 5:10, signifies a heart waiting for the hope of righteousness. Such a heart “loves his neighbor as himself” (5:13–14). This is “the Spirit” that desires against or contrary to “the flesh” (*cf.* Romans 8:5–7)
 - “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit...” The carnal mind does not and cannot submit to the law of God (Romans 8:7); it’s desires are opposite to the desires of the heart walking after the Spirit (5:16).
 - “Ye cannot do the things that ye would...” Those walking in the Spirit cannot fulfill the desires of the flesh (5:13–17); this person is has crucified the flesh (5:26). [Romans 8:4–8]

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3. How are we “led by the Spirit”?
- We are not led:
 - By direct revelation (Galatians 1:8–9; 2:6)
 - By direct, bodily indwelling (Galatians 2:13–16)
 - By direct, divine regeneration (Galatians 4:6, 9; 5:4)
 - We are led:
 - By the faith of Christ (Galatians 2:16)
 - By the truth (Galatians 3:1–2)
 - By the Word (Galatians 6:1, 6)

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3. How are we “led by the Spirit”?

- “But if ye be led of the Spirit...” We are led by the Spirit when we are obeying the teaching of the Spirit (5:13–16). These are the “spiritual” (6:1).
- “Ye are not under the Law...” Paul does not mean that the Law of Moses was not from God (Romans 7:14–16). Rather, he points up the dichotomy that exists between the two opposing systems of justification. They are irreconcilable (Romans 11:6; 4:4). The man who is after the Spirit knows he cannot be justified by the works of the Law (Galatians 2:16).

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4. With which sins among the works of the flesh is Paul most concerned in this context?

- “If ye bite and devour...” This is the wrangling, quarreling, maneuvering and manipulation characteristic of partyism.
- “Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another” *Vain glory* is self-conceit (Galatians 6:12–13; cf. 5:11). It is manifested in *provoking one another*, challenging one another (Galatians 2:3, 12, 14; 5:12; 6:17), or *envying one another*, the jealousy of the party spirit (Galatians 4:17–19).

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5. How does one produce the fruit of the Spirit?

- “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh...if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” We are led by the Spirit when we are obeying the teaching of the Spirit (5:13–16). It is only then that we are “lined up” or “in step” with the Spirit (5:25).
- “They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts...” In 2:20, Paul says Christ lives in me by the faith, by the Gospel. We crucified the old man with his deeds (Colossians 3:9) putting off the former manner of life (Ephesians 4:22) ceasing to serve sin (Romans 6:6).

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6. What does it mean to crucify the flesh?

- “They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh... Not a physical crucifixion, though some have been crucified. Paul calls it a crucifixion “with Christ”. This takes place in water baptism (Romans 6:3–4; Colossians 2:11–13; 3:1). In our conversion we are dead to the world and the world is dead to us (Galatians 6:14). We no longer follow that mind of rebellion against God (Romans 8:7).
- “With the affections and lusts...” That which dies in conversion is the old man which was corrupted through lust (Ephesians 4:22; 2 Peter 1:4). Having a new mind which follows the Spirit we do only what He wills (5:17).

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7. What does it mean to “live in the Spirit” in 5:25?

- “If we live in the Spirit....” There is no denying that we are spiritually alive in Christ when the Holy Spirit dwells in us. However, this is not a literal, personal, direct, bodily indwelling. We live, when the old man dies, and the new man rises by grace through faith in Christ (Romans 6:1–6).
- “Let us also walk in the Spirit...” Those that are alive through the Spirit are known by their conduct (5:16–24). They live unto God (2:19). They are dead to the world (6:14). They have put to death the old man (5:24).

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8. What does it mean to “walk in the Spirit” in 5:25?

- “Walk in the Spirit,....” in 5:16 is an imperative necessary to avoid the lust of the flesh. As we observed it is a figure commonly used by Paul to signify the Christian lifestyle. It is in the Spirit and not in the flesh.
- “Let us also walk in the Spirit...” in 5:25 Paul switches figures and has in view not so much the lifestyle, but the discipline necessary to achieving the lifestyle. Paul says, “Fall in!” We need to get in step with the Spirit, fall in rank behind Him.

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