

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2017: *The Gospel in Galatians*

Lesson 12 “Living by the Spirit”

Read for this week’s study

Galatians 5:16–25; Deuteronomy 13:4, 5; Romans 7:14–24; Jeremiah 7:9; Hosea 4:2; Matthew 22:35–40.

Memory Text

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16, ESV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Walking in the Spirit
- III. The Christian’s Conflict
- IV. The Works of the Flesh
- V. The Fruit of the Spirit (*Gal. 5:22–24*)
- VI. The Way to Victory
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “As believers we possess two natures, the flesh and the Spirit, and they are in conflict. Although our sinful nature will always be ‘prone’ to wander from God, if we are willing to surrender to His Spirit, we do not have to be enslaved to the desires of the flesh. This is the thrust of Paul’s message in the texts for the week.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Why was Christianity first called “the Way” and what is the significance of the fact that Paul’s metaphor for Christian life is “walking”? How is the Old Testament “walking in the law” significant here and what does the shift to “walking in the Spirit” represent? Is there anything that makes “walking in the Spirit” easier or more difficult for you?
3. “Throughout history, Christians have longed for relief from this struggle [between the flesh and the Spirit]. Some have sought to end the conflict by withdrawing from society, while others have claimed that the sinful nature can be eradicated by some divine act of grace. Both attempts are misguided. Though by the Spirit’s power we certainly can subdue the desires of the flesh, the conflict will continue in various ways until we receive a new body at the Second Coming. Fleeing from society does

not help, because no matter where we go, we take the struggle with us, and we will until death or the Second Coming.” (Monday’s lesson)

4. “Having introduced the conflict that exists between the flesh and the Spirit, Paul in Galatians 5:18–26 elaborates on the nature of this contrast by means of a list of ethical vices and virtues. The catalog of vices or virtues was a well-established literary feature present in both Jewish and Greco-Roman literature. These lists identified behavior to be avoided and virtues to be emulated.” (Tuesday’s lesson)
5. There is no suggestion that the Galatians were themselves engaged in “the works of the flesh” that Paul lists here in all their sordid and ugly detail. The point he is making is that if they emphasize ‘the flesh,’ by getting circumcised, they are putting themselves on the same level as the pagan world around them.
6. People start off in the condition that Paul calls ‘flesh’. They are born to different families with their ethnic and territorial identities. They discover within themselves all kinds of desires, which, if allowed full rein, will produce the ‘works’ listed in verses 19-21. A society in which most people behave like that will not be happy and thriving.
7. But because of the death and resurrection of the Messiah, God’s Spirit goes to work and his people are involved in a movement through death to new life (2:19-20). This renewal leaves behind precisely the life in which ‘the flesh’ determines who one is and how one behaves. They begin to ‘bear fruit’. The Spirit provides the new motivation to become a new type of community.
8. This work of the Holy Spirit is a process which does not bypass our thinking and our choosing. We must set our minds and intentions to produce the fruit, it isn’t a matter of just relaxing and doing what comes naturally. That’s why Paul urges the Galatians to ‘line up with the spirit’ (5:25). We need to visualize, to picture the effect the Spirit wants to produce, reflect on how it will come about and make a firm decision to let the life of the Spirit have its complete way.
9. How can we have the blend of truth and love (cf. Eph 4:15), which is often so elusive in church life? How can we discern where the Spirit is working in our lives, in our community and identify areas in which we can allow the Spirit to work more effectively? He has a job to produce in us, through us and He works around us. All three are of equal importance. Our discernment and participation will allow the Spirit to guide us into a richer relationship with God and others.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Recommended Listening: The entire series by Graham Maxwell on the book of Galatians is available at <http://pkp.cc/MMGALATIANS66>

“But I say walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh.” Of course to be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with truth and honesty and integrity and love, and all the good things listed in 1 Corinthians 13. “For the desires of the flesh [that is our natural inclinations], are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh. For these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would.” Remember Romans 7: “All the good that I would, I don’t do. And all the evil that I don’t want to do is what I do.” He’s touching on that same struggle there. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, Galatians, #5, recorded March, 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/5MMGALATIANS66>

Lou: You referred to Romans 7 and 8 and this struggle that goes on. What is this struggle? When is it? Is it before conversion, or is it after conversion?

Graham: The answer I like to give is this: if you are struggling before conversion, if you are struggling during conversion, if you are struggling after conversion, if you are ever struggling, then look to Jesus Christ. I think it’s an unnecessary squabble as to when the struggle occurs. Whenever you are struggling, before, during, or after conversion, thanks be to God for Jesus Christ our Lord. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from series, “Conversations About God”, #20 - *At Peace with Our Heavenly Father*, recorded June 1984} {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #20 with Lou Venden, “*At Peace with Our Heavenly Father*” recorded June, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/20MMCAG>

You see, if you’re dogmatic about freedom, it means you always will respect other people’s freedom. So if I’m absolutely dogmatic about freedom, you’re absolutely safe. I would never intrude on your freedom. And if you have a society where everybody is absolutely, non-negotiably committed to freedom, then we’re all free, you see. And that’s why you can understand Paul saying this. Now, are we that committed to freedom? Look at Galatians 5:1, beginning: “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” He’s been talking about law all the way through, and he’s been explaining the function of law. What brings freedom? Jesus said, “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.” Truth about what? Well, ultimately, the truth about God, and about his government, about what he wants of us, and in Galatians, particularly, the truth about God’s use of law. It is no threat to our freedom at all. Besides, if you look at the law, what’s the truth about what the law requires, anyway? Is this a threat to our freedom? Look at 5:13:

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another take heed that you are not consumed by one another.

One could be reading Romans here. Remember Romans 13:8, 10, he says love is the fulfilling of the law. The man who loves his neighbor has fulfilled all law. He says the same thing here in Galatians. Well, supposing then we all obeyed the law, and we all loved each other, which would mean we'd never be rude, never arrogant, never insist on having our own way, and so on. Would that be a threat to our freedom? We'd be really free, you see. So if we really understand what the law requires, it's a guarantee of freedom. If God says, "I'll only save people who are committed to the spirit of my law, it means I'll only save people who love one another, and therefore can be trusted, and there will be peace and freedom."

Now, Jesus said that, and Moses said that in Leviticus and in Deuteronomy. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Galatians, recorded May, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/65MMPOGIA66>*

Further Study with Ellen White

The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness. The more closely believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully have they testified of their Redeemer's love and of His saving grace. The men and women who through the long centuries of persecution and trial enjoyed a large measure of the presence of the Spirit in their lives, have stood as signs and wonders in the world. Before angels and men they have revealed the transforming power of redeeming love. {AA 49.2}

The Comforter is called "the Spirit of truth." His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it

from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. {DA 671.1}

Christ determined that when He ascended from this earth, He would bestow a gift on those who had believed on Him, and those who should believe on Him. What gift could He bestow rich enough to signalize and grace His ascension to the mediatorial throne? It must be worthy of His greatness and His royalty. He determined to give His representative, the third person of the Godhead. This gift could not be excelled. He would give all gifts in one, and therefore the divine Spirit, that converting, enlightening, and sanctifying power, would be His donation. . . . {6BC 1052.5}

When Christ ascended to the Father, He did not leave His followers without help. The Holy Spirit, as His representative, and the heavenly angels, as ministering spirits, are sent forth to aid those who against great odds are fighting the good fight of faith. Ever remember that Jesus is your helper. No one understands as well as He your peculiarities of character. He is watching over you, and if you are willing to be guided by Him, He will throw around you influences for good that will enable you to accomplish all His will for you. {MYP 17.1}

God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, quickens all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God, develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfil the requirements of God. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual devotion establishes so close a relation between Jesus and His disciples that the Christian becomes like his Master in character. He has clearer, broader views. His discernment is more penetrative, his judgment better balanced. So quickened is he by the life-giving power of the Sun of Righteousness, that he is enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God. {GW 285.3}

Christ gives them the breath of His own Spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through cooperation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence. {ML 49.4}

The sanctification of the soul by the working of the Holy Spirit is the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity. Gospel religion is Christ in the life—a living, active principle. It is the grace of Christ revealed in character and wrought out in good works. The principles of the gospel cannot be disconnected from any department of practical life. Every line of Christian experience and labor is to be a representation of the life of Christ. {COL 384.1}

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.” By this parable Christ seeks to illustrate the work of the Holy

Spirit upon the human heart. The process is invisible by which the leaven changes the meal into which it has been introduced; but it continues to work until the meal is converted into bread. So the leaven of truth, working inwardly, produces a complete change in the human heart. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. But while every faculty is regenerated, man does not lose his identity. New faculties are not supplied, but a thorough change is made in the employment of those faculties. The heart is cleansed from all impurity, and man is fitted with traits of character that will enable him to do service for God. {ST, October 13, 1898 par. 1}

God has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. He provides opportunities and opens channels of working. If His people are watching the indications of His providence, and are ready to cooperate with Him, they will see mighty results. {PK 660.3}

It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil and to impress His own character on His church. . . . {ML 46.2}

When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the joy of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see, creates a new being in the image of God. {ML 46.3}

Provision is made by God Himself for every soul that turns to the Lord, to receive His immediate cooperation. The Holy Spirit becomes His efficiency. {ML 47.4}

It is through the mighty agency of the Holy Spirit that the government of Satan is to be subdued and subjected. It is the Holy Spirit that convinces of sin, and expels it from the soul by the consent of the human agent. The mind is then brought under a new law, and that law is the royal law of liberty. Jesus came to break the shackles of sin-slavery from the soul; for sin can triumph only when the liberty of the soul is extinguished. Jesus reached to the very depth of human woe and misery, and His love attracts man to Himself. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, He lifts the mind up from its degradation, and fastens it upon the eternal reality. Through the merits of Christ man may be able to exercise the noblest powers of his being, and expel sin from his soul. . . . {TDG 124.2}

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17. {SC 57.1}

The germination of the seed represents the beginning of spiritual life, and the development of the plant is a figure of the development of character. There can be no life without growth. The plant must either grow or die. As its growth is silent and imperceptible, but continuous, so is the growth of character. At every stage of development our life may be perfect; yet if God's purpose for us is fulfilled, there will be constant advancement. {Ed 105.3}

The mighty power of the Holy Spirit works an entire transformation in the character of the human agent, making him a new creature in Christ Jesus. When a man is filled with the Spirit, the more severely he is tested and tried, the more clearly he proves that he is a representative of Christ. The peace that dwells in the soul is seen on the countenance. The words and actions express the love of the Saviour. There is no striving for the highest place. Self is renounced. The name of Jesus is written on all that is said and done. {6BC 1117.17}

It is impossible for finite minds to comprehend the work of redemption. Its mystery exceeds human knowledge; yet he who passes from death to life realizes that it is a divine reality. The beginning of redemption we may know here through a personal experience. Its results reach through the eternal ages. {DA 173.2}

Thus it is with the truly righteous man. He is unconscious of his goodness and piety. Religious principle has become the spring of his life and conduct, and it is just as natural for him to bear the fruits of the Spirit as for the fig tree to bear figs or for the rosebush to yield roses. His nature is so thoroughly imbued with love for God and his fellow men that he works the works of Christ with a willing heart. {SL 13.1}

Christ Himself calls our attention to the growth of the vegetable world as an illustration of the agency of His Spirit in sustaining spiritual life. The sap of the vine, ascending from the root, is diffused to the branches, sustaining growth and producing blossoms and fruit. So the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Saviour, pervades the soul, renews the motives and affections, and brings even the thoughts into obedience to the will of God, enabling the receiver to bear the precious fruit of holy deeds. {AA 284.1}

The loveliness of the character of Christ will be seen in His followers. It was His delight to do the will of God. Love to God, zeal for His glory, was the controlling power in our Saviour's life. Love beautified and ennobled all His actions. Love is of God. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. It is found only in the heart where Jesus reigns. "We love, because He first loved us." 1 John 4:19, R.V. In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around. {SC 59.3}