

SPIRITUAL FRUIT

Practical Guide for Daily Living

Discussion Guide
Vol. 12, No. 9
June 27, 2010

Title

We Have Been Set Free

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Galatians 5:13-18

Introduction: In the next few weeks we will be considering Paul's admonition to the Galatians to *walk by the Spirit* resulting in the *fruit of the Spirit* being produced in our lives. In our culture we tend to view our relationship with God and our spiritual maturity as a purely personal, private, and individualistic experience. In this passage we will learn that Paul has something very different in mind: spiritual maturity and the manifestation of spiritual fruit is in the context of community, specifically the fellowship of the local church. We are called to be like Christ among one another.

Sermon Outline

- I. **In Christ we stand at the threshold of transformation—we CAN be Christlike! (v. 13)**
 - A. If we have rightly understood the Gospel and the message of grace we realize that we were called to freedom; at last we are truly free.
 - B. We are not, however, removed from the presence of the flesh (carnal nature) and we are therefore tempted to use our freedom as an opportunity for the flesh.
 1. The Greek word for **opportunity** was originally a military term that meant a base of operations or the starting point of a tactical expedition.
 2. Our position in Christ, as He sets us free, is the starting point of a spiritual expedition...it is not the end of the campaign but the starting point of an unfolding series of conquests wherein we learn obedience to the Holy Spirit in order to become like Christ.
 - C. The crucible of our spiritual makeover into the image of Jesus Christ is the local church where, as free followers of the Lamb we become willing slaves to one another. (The opposite of loving unity is selfish pride and strife resulting in the destruction of the body—verses 14-15)
- II. **We DO have options and we CAN be like Jesus Christ in our behavior! (v. 16)**
 - A. The popular notion among many believers is that, “we are only human” and truly becoming and acting like Jesus Christ is not only unreasonable but impossible.
 - B. Paul makes it clear that we have a choice:
 1. **Walk**—this is an imperative command to take action and begin to move in a direction (from our tactical starting point) toward *Spirit-filled* behavior. It is our responsibility to choose the life in the Spirit.
 2. **By the Spirit**—this is the clear indication that this walking is not in our own power but by the Spirit. He is the agency, the power, behind our transformation.
 3. **You will not carry out the inclinations of the flesh**—there is a divine result that overcomes what we call *being only human* and transforms our character into Christlikeness.
 - C. There is a campaign to be waged, a war to be won, but if we are led by the Spirit the flesh will not triumph, we will become like Jesus. (verses 17-18)

Conclusion: The fruit that God wants to develop in us and in our community is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It arises from, and is derived from Him. It is not natural to us, which is why it seems superhuman and therefore beyond our grasp. Paul explains, however, that it is attainable: the fruit is produced in us when we allow the Spirit to control us, therefore we are without excuse. We are as Christlike as we want to be!

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

Galatians 5:13-18

