

## *Galatians: Freedom In Christ*

Week 11: Flesh vs Spirit (Gal 5:13 – 26)

### Look Around

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In America, we often hear talk about our “God-given rights” to do what we desire. When you think about this phrase, what comes to mind?

We often equate freedom with the absence of responsibility and accountability, but nothing could be further from the truth. To whom much is given, much is required. The gift of freedom we have through faith in Christ is no different. Freedom comes with the responsibility to live by the Spirit to ward off the temptation to do whatever our flesh desires.

### Look at the Text – Key Concepts

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- Works of the Flesh – the things humans naturally tend towards that are contrary to God’s design for us.

### Look at the Text – Context

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In this section of the letter, Paul addresses the escalating conflict over whether to follow The Law. It seems that bitter conflict had erupted in the community over whether to obey The Law, ripping the community apart. Out of concern, Paul begins to teach the Galatians the difference between living by the flesh vs living by the Spirit. With this teaching, Paul asks the Galatians to choose who they will trust to guide their behavior: the Spirit of God or the sinful nature of their flesh.

## Look at the Text – Observation & Interpretation

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### Galatians 5:13 – 26

#### **Observation**

- How are the Galatians to use their freedom in Christ?
  
- How does Paul suggest the Galatians combat the desires of the flesh?
  
- What does Paul list as acts of the flesh?
  
- When we live by the Spirit, what fruit is produced?
  
- Why are the Spirit and the flesh in conflict with one another?

#### **Interpretation**

- Why do you suppose Paul begins to discuss how the Galatians should use their freedom in Christ at this point in his letter?
  
- Why do you suppose the entire law is fulfilled by keeping the command: Love your neighbor as yourself?

- In Galatians 5:19, Paul says the acts of the flesh are obvious. Why do you suppose Paul believes that the acts of the flesh listed stand out as undeniably contrary to the Spirit of God?

## Look At God

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- Choosing to be led by the Spirit requires that we put our trust and faith in God and not the desires of our flesh. As you consider all you have learned about God in this study, write a list of things that make God worthy of placing your trust and faith in God alone.
  
- Write a prayer expressing your desire to trust God in all areas of your life.

## Look At Me

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- Can you find any traces of indulging in the flesh in your life?
  
- How does indulging in acts of the flesh affect your relationships with the people you are called to love?



- Becoming conceited, provoking, and envying others are actions fueled by the flesh. Can you name some actions that are Spirit-led? What makes you believe these are Spirit-led behaviors?
  
- It is the Holy Spirit's work within you that produces the fruit of the Spirit. What spiritual practices can you put in place that open you up to the Holy Spirit's transformation work?