

Galatians 5:22-26

Gal 5:22 (NKJV) **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,** ²³ **gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.** ²⁴ **And those *who are Christ's* have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.** ²⁵ **If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.** ²⁶ **Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.**

We come to [Galatians 5:24](#) which says,

Gal 5:24 (NKJV) **And those *who are Christ's* have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**

What we want to do in this study is simply to introduce this amazing principle. This really is a very strategic statement that Paul makes regarding the believer's life, and what makes it so important is that the verb for "**have crucified**" is in the indicative mood (statement of fact), the aorist tense (past tense), and the active voice (the subject is acting), and how we handle that verb parsing is critical to understanding what Paul is saying in this sentence. Because the verb is in the aorist tense and active voice, it means that this idea of crucifying the flesh is something that "**we**" as believers did in the past.

This particular word for "**have crucified**" is always used in the New Testament to refer to the crucifixion of Christ, with the exception of four instances where it does not. Three of those occur in [Galatians](#) and once in [Romans](#). In [Romans 6:6](#) Paul says,

Ro 6:6 (NKJV) **knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.**

Now what makes this passage different from [Galatians 5:24](#), and this is very critical, is that the verb "**was crucified with**" is in indicative mood (mood of fact), aorist tense (past tense), but it is in the passive voice which means that someone else has enacted this on the believer. This is something that God did for the believer at their salvation, and it is an absolute and eternal fact that it has happened.

Please notice in this passage that Paul says that the believer must know something – "**knowing this**". This is an event that the believer must know about, must understand, must comprehend and recognize. What Paul is clearly saying in this passage is that if we as a believer never come to knowing and understanding the reality of this particular truth about what happened both for us and to us at the death of Christ that "**our old man was crucified with Him**", then we will never understand the last part that "**we should no longer be slaves of sin**". The reality of what God did for the believer was that God, not the believer, broke the controlling power of sin over the believer's life to which they were previously addicted. As a believer, I have to know this reality. There is no sin in a believer's life by which they should be controlled. Now, please appreciate that this verb is NOT saying that the believer never struggles with sin, but that that part of their life that previously controlled them – namely sin, that the power of that sin has been crucified with Christ.

In this verse in [Romans 6:6](#), the goal, the objective, and the target is the third clause, or the third conclusion. The end purpose is that we as believers should be free from the tyranny of sin and that we should "**no longer be slaves of sin**". So, here Paul says that the "**old man was crucified**". What he is affirming in this verse is that the actual moment when the believer was justified before God by faith in Jesus Christ, that at that moment "**the old man was crucified**". Now, when thinking of the word

crucified, it is perfectly correct to think of it as saying that something or someone was “killed” or they were “executed”. Crucifixion always left its victim dead.

Galatians 2:20 says,

Gal 2:20 (NKJV) **I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.**

This verse says that “**I have been crucified**” and the verb is in the indicative mood (mood of fact), perfect tense (past tense with ongoing results), and middle voice (calls attention to the subject). It would be like saying “**I myself have been crucified with Christ**”, emphasizing that this is actually something that happened both to and for the believer personally. So once again, this verse is referring specifically to the fact that at the moment of salvation that the believer’s sinful, unregenerate self was crucified and he was “**born again**” into a completely different kind of life.

Galatians 6:14 says,

Gal 6:14 (NKJV) **But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.**

This verse says that “**the world has been crucified to me**”, and also by implication that “**I have been crucified to the world**”.

When the word “**crucified**” is used, it refers to the method by which someone was killed or executed. When we put all of these verses together, there are two very distinct ideas that are forthcoming. The first is that the idea of dying for the believer is something that happened to them once at salvation (positional), but there is also the sense in which it is something that should be happening in their life every day (practical).¹ Paul said it this way in **1 Corinthians 15:31** when he stated that “**I die daily**”. Regarding a believer’s attitude toward sin in their life, Paul said this in **Romans 6:1-2**,

Ro 6:1 (NKJV) **What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? ² Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?**

He says that we have actually “**died to sin**” (indicative, aorist, active). I.e., this is something that the believer has done in the past. In fact, in the **Romans 6:1-5** passage, Paul refers to the idea of dying or being crucified nine times. He uses the words “**crucified, death, died, dead**” to make his point. His whole point is that the believer has “**died to sin**”. That is what he wants his readers to both see and understand. I think that it is perfectly legitimate to say that the very work of God is to counteract and destroy the spirit and soul of sin within the believer so that they “**should no longer be slaves of sin**” (**Romans 6:6**).² It should be the testimony of anyone who is truly following Christ that they are overcomers and that even though sin may be in their life in various forms, that it is not controlling and dominating their life. They should be able to honestly say that they are “**no longer slaves of sin**”.

Galatians 5:24 which is the verse we are studying says,

¹ Morris, 251.

² Clarke, *Romans 6*, ep.

Gal 5:24 (NKJV) **And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**

This verse says that “**those who are Christ’s have crucified**”. Now, as stated earlier, this verb is in the indicative mood, aorist tense, active voice which means that it is something that the actual believer did in the past. However, what was it that the believer actually did? In this context, it is generally understood to refer to that moment in the believer’s life when the believer finally understood and fully embraced and accepted the benefits of what Christ did for them.³ The construction of the verb being in the active voice cannot be dismissed here. It is the difference between something being done to us and for us versus something being done by us. We are the agents of this crucifying of the flesh. It is a deliberate and intentional decision that we are called on to make.

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³ Moo, 367.