

### Galatians 5:24-26

Gal 5:24 (NKJV) **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.**

What we gleaned from the last study is that the ability to crucify the flesh is **not** based on the believer's personal resolve and will power. This next statement is the key, so listen very carefully. **The ability to crucify the flesh is based on the work of Christ on our behalf that must be appropriated into our life by faith.** It seems more than reasonable to assume that is why Paul emphasizes the fact in v25 that the believer is to “**live in the Spirit**” and “**walk in the Spirit**”. His point of emphasis is simple – the Holy Spirit and walking in concert with Him is where the power and the ability and even the motivation to crucify the flesh is derived. If we leave Him out of the spiritual equation, for the most part we are doomed to spiritual mediocrity at best.

The entire Christian life is designed by God to be lived “**by faith**” in what God has done for us and is able to do in us. We also are to do so in such a way that we find ourselves trusting in God's sovereign power on our behalf when things look and appear very bleak. I am not talking about the bogus teaching on name it and claim it or on speaking things into existence as many in charismatic circles seem to do, but on finding ourselves simply trusting in God and His Word when our physical senses may not agree with what we see and think. We look at our situation and see no hope, but there will be times when God wants us to place our hope in Him when all hope seems lost.

We know intuitively that the Christian life is designed to be lived in accordance with and obedience to His Word. We trusted our entire eternity into His hands when we have never even seen Him. We have come to God “**by faith**” and once that has happened, we are then to live “**by faith**”. We live out the Christian life “**by faith**” in what we know is God's will for our lives. Listen to these several verses on living “**by faith**”.

Ro 5:1 (NKJV) **Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,**

2Co 5:7 (NKJV) **For we walk by faith, not by sight.**

What an utterly amazing verse. This is one of those places where it is important to differentiate between perception and reality or what Paul calls faith and sight. The word for “**sight**” is “*eidos*” and it refers to the external appearance of something. It would be similar to how so often we purchase something based on how it has been marketed to us, but once we have bought the product, we find that it falls incredibly short of what it was advertised to do or our expectations. Our perception was one thing, but reality was a wake-up call. Zodhiates says about this word in this verse that it “*refers to the visible appearance of things which are set in contrast to that which directs faith, meaning that the believer is guided not only by what he beholds, but by what he knows to be true though invisible*”.<sup>1</sup>

The point is that much too often we find ourselves basing what we believe about God on what we have personally experienced and not on the truth that He has provided to us in His Word. I.e., we simply do

<sup>1</sup> Zodhiates, 507.

not see how something can work, and often that causes us to doubt God. It is almost as if God is no bigger than our perception of something. When Paul says not to walk by sight, he is simply saying that things are not always as they may appear, and especially in the spiritual realm. I think of the story of when God told Joshua to have the Israelites walk around the city of Jericho seven times and then blow the trumpets. From a purely human and rationalistic perspective, none of that made sense then, nor would it make sense today. For Joshua or for us, a command like that seemed completely irrational and a waste of time. There was absolutely nothing logical or rational about what God was asking Joshua to do. I am sure on the seventh day as they got near the end of that last lap around that huge city with all of its enormous walls that the people in the march were thinking to themselves “this is ridiculous” – but it was not ridiculous at all if it is what God had instructed them to do.

Listen next to [Galatians 2:20](#) which 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.**

Think of this verse in this way. A person cannot be “**in Christ**” and be someone who has been “**crucified with Christ**” without it having a deep and an abiding impact on their life. It is not possible for someone to be saved without that salvation deeply effecting, governing, and controlling their life. Unfortunately, the cultural church of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has embraced the falsehood that someone can be saved without it deeply impacting their life through the concept of “easy believism”, but that is an egregious aberration of the fact that believers are “**new creations**” indwelt by the Holy Spirit and are individuals destined to be glorified. The believer’s spiritual life is not “something” that is in them, but “Someone”. If I can say it in another way, if someone is constantly living for themselves and life revolves around them and their ideas, their perspectives, and their goals, then in all likelihood that individual has never been given the life of God. The life **from God** always produces the life **of God** in the individual. That is its very nature and that is the makeup of what it does in someone who has been saved. A life that is consistently divorced from the will of God and the work of God simply does not have the life of God in it. There is no such thing as a passive Christ or an inactive Holy Spirit. What Christ did in His death, burial, and resurrection, is now a **present, active, and continuing** reality in the believer’s life. Paul wants his readers to appreciate that this life of Christ is not just some idealistic doctrine that has no meaningful bearing on the believer’s life, but rather it is a very active and dynamic reality that is always operating and functioning not only in the believer, but for the believer.

All of this comes to an obvious and inevitable expression in two ways. It expresses itself in the believer’s life when they are **willing to die daily to sin in their life**, and it expresses itself secondly in the believer’s life when they are **willing to live their life for the glory of God**. By dying to self and living for God, the believer begins to experience the very life of God in a way that they never previously saw or even understood. [Romans 8:13](#) expresses this reality this way when it says,

Ro 8:13 **For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.**

It is obvious in both of these last two passages that John's and Paul's concept of living is a spiritual concept which means that the Holy Spirit must be involved. Paul stated the reality of this new life in [Romans 6:4](#) and gave it a new term,

**Ro 6:4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.**

He calls it a “**newness of life**”. The Greek word for “**newness**” is “*kainotes*” and it represents a life that has a completely different quality to it. It means that the new believer will now, because of this “**newness of life**”, behave himself consistently with this new life which is in complete contrast to the way that he formally lived. This is the work and operation of the Holy Spirit within the new believer.<sup>2</sup> What I am trying to do in all of this is give us the foundation we need to believe that we personally can appropriate and integrate this idea of crucifying the flesh into our life. We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and He is the source of our strength.

Here is what we know. We know that everything that God calls on us to do is to be done in faith and “**by faith**” in Him, His Word, and His promises to us. [Hebrews 11:6](#) says,

**Heb 11:6 (NKJV) But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.**

When we struggle, when we fail, and whenever we begin to lose heart, we must come to Him and believe “**that He is**” and “**that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him**”. That is my calling in life. That is your calling in life – to live our lives “**by faith**”. Whenever I fail, I must see that God is able to keep me from falling and to keep me from failing. This is just my personal opinion, but often times when we do fail it is simply God's way of drawing us closer to Him and showing us that trusting Him is always the best thing for our life.

Unfortunately, there are many believers who have never really done this in their life. They have not chosen to continually live “**by faith**”, but rather keep depending on their personal ideas, on their personal resolve, and on their personal desires. They simply live their life the way that they want to live their life and in that fatal flaw of their understanding, they actually forfeit the most amazing life they could ever live. They entered into the Christian life with good intentions, but those intentions never materialized in their life. They are still debating every day as to the level of commitment they are going to give to Christ. They are still struggling about yielding this part or that part of their life to Christ. It is always a debate that is going on in their life – am I going to fully yield my life to Christ, or am I going to continue to live and think and talk like I want to live, think, and talk? Paul is going to tell us in [Galatians 5:25](#) that we are to do two distinct things – “**live in the Spirit**” and “**walk in the Spirit**”. However, we will never be able to do that if in reality we fail to understand this undergirding truth that “**those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires**”, and why we are able to do that in a very practical and meaningful way. What this verse is clearly saying, and this is the point, is that every believer has to come to a place in their personal walk with God where they make this decision – this decision that they truly are going to fully yield their life to Christ no matter what area of their life it may be. It may be in their speech, in their attitude at work, in the necessary disciplines of their life, in their

<sup>2</sup> Vine's, 782-783.

marriage, in their commitments to God's church, in their bad habits, in how they use their resources, in their personal resolve to obey the Word of God when He reveals His will to them in that Word, and many other areas of their life.

Now, in order to effectively appropriate this great truth of crucifying our flesh, there are several things that will aid us in our efforts to do so. There will be a struggle. Please remember [Galatians 5:17](#) which declares the following,

**Gal 5:17 (NKJV) For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.**

There will always be a struggle. Just mark that down as a reality. Stated another way, if there is no struggle, the flesh will become your default position.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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