

Galatians 5 (Part 3): 13-16 • The Life of the Spirit

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Galatians chapter 5. You guys have been so patient throughout our study of Galatians, because up to this point, it's been pretty. (Pastor Paul sighs) Apostle Paul has been just answering the issues related to legalism and the false message that the Jewish legalists brought to the churches in Galatia. Which is that, in addition to Jesus Christ and believing in Him, you must also submit to circumcision, keep the law of Moses, and so forth.

And Paul has been addressing that in the sense of confronting that false teaching up to this point. But he hasn't really said a whole lot about how we as Christians do live. He's had little comments. But we're going to see a lot more of that now. And we'll talk about it here, but we're going to look at just a few verses this morning.

We're in chapter 5, look at verse 13 and following. It says, *“For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”*¹⁴ *For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”*¹⁵ *But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.”*

¹⁶ *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”* (ESV) I want you to stop there please. Let's pray.

Holy Spirit, come and meet us in this place. Allow us to hear Your voice. Teach us today, for You are the teacher. Guide us and direct us, we ask in Jesus name, amen.

Paul finally hits something here in this part of the letter, which to you guys, at least it was to me, it's a relief for him to begin to talk about the way that you and I are supposed to live because the Galatians had become confused. They were being told that the law was necessary. Oh, yeah, this believing in Jesus is okay. But the law, you must follow the law as well. And they were confused, and Christians are still confused. For the last 2,000 years, the Christian church has gone through periods of confusion related to how the law should impact us as

Christians. And over that 2,000 plus years, we've seen the law seep back in to the gospel and to the practice of the Christian church.

Why do you think there are Seventh Day Adventist churches? I'm not criticizing, putting down here. I'm just telling you, why do you think those exist? It's because the whole idea of the seventh day observance, which was commanded upon the Jews under the Mosaic Law, seeped back into the church. And we've..., and that's not the end of it. We've seen all kinds of other things. Legalistic little tendencies make their way back into the church, coming and going over the period of some 2,000 years.

The Galatians were confused, Christians today are confused. And we're really not sure which end is up sometimes as it relates to the law and how it applies to us. I still get notes from people wanting to know, okay, now it says this in the Old Testament, so how am I supposed to apply that to my life? And they don't get it. That we Christians are not under the Mosaic Law.

And I'm not surprised, I suppose, that there's confusion on that topic, because, have you seen situations happen where the government will try to outlaw some aspect of the Word of God in a public place, and usually it's something like the Ten Commandments. And Christians, as a response to that, more of a silent protest, they'll take these cardboard cutouts of the Ten Commandments and put them in their lawn. Maybe you guys have even done it.

And, fundamentally, I understand exactly what is being done, what is being said, and I understand the right that you have as a citizen of the United States to protest and say, I don't like the fact that the government is pulling the Word of God out of our schools, and out of our institutions of learning, and da, da, da, da, da. I get that.

But can I just tell you in all honesty, when I drive by somebody's house and I see a cardboard cutout of the Ten Commandments in their front yard, I get a little uncomfortable. Not because I have any problem with the Ten Commandments at all, part of the Word of God. What I get uncomfortable with is your neighbors. Because I think it speaks something to your neighbors, which confirms in their hearts and minds what I think they already believe anyway. And that is, that we Christians are under the law.

Because I don't know of anybody who's ever gone to their neighbors and explained the situation to them. By the way, this is just a little protest because the government keeps pulling the Word of God out of various public sectors of our society, so I'm doing this as a protest against that. But by the way, I just

wanted you to know I'm a Christian, but I'm not under the law of Moses. I'm just...

Did anybody do that? Did anybody go and explain that to their neighbors? I don't think so. So what are your neighbors going to think? All they're going to see is the law in your front yard. And they're going to think, well, there you go. I guess I know what to expect when I go to their church. I'm just going to be hit with a bunch of rules and so forth.

Paul repeatedly tells the Galatians throughout this letter that we, as Christians, are not under the Mosaic Law.

Obviously, though, that brings up a very natural question. What are we under? I mean, we asked this question before. We'll put it up on the screen again.

If Christians aren't under the Law, are we LAWLESS?

If Christians aren't under the law, does that mean that we are lawless?

Well, obviously, that's not the case. But it is true, we do not live under the law. So that brings up the question, how then do we live? What do we live by? If we're not living under the guidelines of the Mosaic Law, how then are we living?

And Paul is going to answer that question and he does. And I'll go to the last verse that we looked at, and let's just look at it again. Verse 16. Look in your Bible, because here's the answer, you guys.

This is it. Verse 16, *"But I say, walk by the Spirit, (he says) and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh."* And that's the focus, you see, really on the remainder of this letter.

Paul has finally gotten to the point. He's been answering the false teaching of the religious legalists who are saying, you must follow and walk by the law so as not to gratify the desires or the lusts, if you will, of your sinful nature.

Paul says, no!, that's not it. He says, *"...I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh."* We're going to look at this here and we're going to see about this life of the Spirit that Paul is talking about in these verses. This living by the Spirit, what does that even mean? Do you know how to do it? If somebody asked you, how do I walk by the Spirit? What would you say? Well, Paul's going to talk about it here, and he's going to talk about some of the fruits

that come from it as well. In fact, he mentions them, the first verse we looked at is verse 13. Look with me again in your Bible.

It says, *“For you were called to freedom, brothers.”* And your Bible may say, liberty. Now this is one of the first fruits of walking by the Spirit.

When you and I as Christians walk by the Spirit, you know what it produces? It produces freedom. And I can't even begin to tell you all the different ways that freedom is manifested. It would take me all day.

But one of the main things that Paul is talking about here is freedom from the law, freedom from condemnation, freedom from rules and regulations based on an external source like the Ten Commandments, or something like that. We're free. Here's the interesting thing about this. We're called to be free.

The funny thing is, I seriously doubt, again, if you go back to your neighbor or just, if you went out on the street and polled people and said, born again Christians, what's the one word that you would think of to describe them? I seriously doubt they would say freedom. And yet that's what we're called to.

We're called, Paul says, to be free. I don't think most Christians would define themselves using the word, freedom or free. So how can we expect our unbelieving neighbors to come up with that kind of an idea? And that's sad. It's sad because we're called to be free, we're called to walk in freedom.

Jesus declared it. Let me show you this passage from John chapter 8, verse 36. Jesus said,

John 8:36 (ESV)

...if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

...if the Son sets you free, (and by the way He does) you will be free indeed.

And the word, indeed, means completely free. If Jesus sets you free, you're free. And like I said, I didn't have time to go into all the different ways we as Christians are set free. It's a glorious study though, because it just speaks of the liberty that we have in Jesus.

Liberty to do what we want and sin however we want? No, of course not. Paul's going to talk about that, but see, that was what he was being criticized about. People would say to him, Paul, you can't go around telling people that they don't have to live by the law. You can't do that. If you do it, they won't be in liberty,

they'll be in libertinism. Do you understand the definition of libertinism? Just in case you need a refresher.

libertinism (Noun)

(def) A lifestyle or pattern of behavior characterized by self-indulgence and lack of restraint, especially involving sexual promiscuity, and rejection of religious or other moral authority.

It's a lifestyle or pattern of behavior characterized by self-indulgence and a lack of restraint, especially involving sexual promiscuity, and this is the big thing, a rejection of religious or other moral authority.

So if you call somebody a libertine, that's not a political party. That's a description of someone who has no moral moorings, who has no moral guidelines in their life. They're just like, bleh! They live however they want. That's a libertine.

So libertinism, is what Paul was being criticized or accused of preaching. Paul, you can't do that, our society will devolve into chaos if you just tell people they don't have to follow the law. What are you even thinking? Paul had to address these issues.

Look at the second part of verse 13. He begins to address it there by saying, *"Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another."* Because as you know, and he's going to even mention later, loving and serving one another. Loving your brother is the summation of the law which the law demanded but couldn't follow through on as far as helping you to actually do it.

But he says, don't *"use your freedom, your liberty as an opportunity for the flesh."* And the word, opportunity is maybe even better than excuse. I am not under the law, so I can take my neighbor's wife and have her as my own, I'm not under the law. No! Paul says don't use the fact that you're not under the Mosaic Law as an excuse to go live however you want.

He goes on in verse 14. He says, *"...the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* And again, something that the law of Moses demanded but couldn't deliver on as far as helping you and I to actually follow it.

Before Paul gets into this a little bit more, one more quick warning about legalism in verse 15 before he moves on. He says, *"But if you bite and devour*

one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.” What a great verse. You know what? Verse 15 is a description of the environment of legalism and what it produces.

Some of you guys were raised in very legalistic environments, in the home or in church, and you guys know that a legalistic environment does not foster love for one another. It fosters a critical eye. Where the rules are laid out and there are those who are the self-appointed, rule watchers, to make sure that everybody else follows the laws. And they've got the eagle eye on you, sort of a thing, and they're like, yeah, alright. You step out of line, you know what's coming.

And that's exactly what happens. Any little violation of the known rules, and boom, they pounce. And what happens is that church becomes cannibalistic. They literally feed on one another as they pounce on one another and are critical about you didn't accomplish, or you didn't fulfill, or you didn't keep the rules, sort of a thing.

Paul's just describing this idea of a legalistic environment. It's the exact opposite of when we're led by the Spirit. When we're led by the Spirit, there is going to be a natural love for one another that extends grace to one another when we see people making mistakes because we know that we're prone to the exact same mistakes and failures, right?

And so when I'm being led by the Spirit and somebody's caught in a sin, my heart is, oh, brother or sister, let me pray with you. Let me encourage you. We're not going to pounce. We're not going to feed on their flesh. We're going to do our best to build them up in the Lord and bring them to a place of victory in Jesus Christ because there's a love that issues forth from the Spirit through us, and so forth.

This is what it means to be led by the Spirit, this is what Paul is saying. And by the way, he makes the point. And when we're walking according to the Spirit, we actually fulfill the requirements of the Old Testament law. Not that we keep the law in that sense, but we actually fulfill it through that sort of an operation of love through the Spirit.

Again, the question comes up, if we're not under the law of Moses, how are we guided? And I want you to look again at verse 16, because this is where we are focusing. He says, *“But I say, walk by the Spirit.”*

By the way, this was my very first Bible memory verse, when I was a little boy. Actually that's not true. I was 25. I wish I could say I was a little boy, I really

do. I wish I could say that I started memorizing God's Word at age 5. But I was 25 because that's how old I was when God got a hold of my heart and I started really truly walking with Him. But for some reason or another, Galatians 5:16 was the first verse that I picked out to memorize. I have no idea why. But it's a good one.

“...I say, walk by the Spirit (Paul says) and (as a result,) you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. This is, you guys, so simple and yet so profound. So powerful and so effective.

And this is what, you see, Paul's critics didn't understand. They said, you take away the law of Moses, you take away all understanding of right and wrong. You take away all understanding of good and bad. How are these people going to know how to live? How are they going to know what to do? You give them the law, that's how they know.

Paul says no!, and what the reason that he's arguing with these people is because these individuals have no idea whatsoever about what he's talking about, which is not the law of Moses. It's another law. Let me show you from Romans 8, verses 1 and 2, he says,

Romans 8:1-2 (ESV)

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For **the law of the Spirit of life** has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.*

*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (you know why? Because its only through the law that we are condemned. He says, now, *There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*) For (look at this) **For the law of the Spirit of life** has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.*

Paul's referring here, not to the law of Moses that you and I are under, but the law of the Spirit. There's our answer to the question: if Christians aren't under the law, are they lawless? No, they're not lawless. They're under the law of the Spirit.

Actually, Paul refers to it in another way, too. Look at 1 Corinthians chapter 9. He says,

1 Corinthian 9:20-21 (NIV)

*To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law **but am under Christ's law**), so as to win those not having the law.*

*To the Jews I became like a Jew, (meaning when he was witnessing, talking to them about the Lord, in order) to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (look what he says parenthetically) (though I myself am not under the law), (He was a Pharisee too, but now he says, I'm not under the law, but then he said,) so as to win those under the law. (and then when I'm witnessing) To those not having the law (meaning Gentiles) I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law **but am under Christ's law**), so as to win those not having the law.*

See how he refers to it in another way? He's talking about "Christ's law," or if you will, from Romans, "the law of the Spirit," which is the law that is going on in our lives.

What is this law of the Spirit? Well, this is what God foretold hundreds of years before it came. And you know what He said about it? He said, it's going to be incredibly better, incredibly more effective, incredibly more powerful in your life for a couple of really significant reasons.

Here's the first reason that I'll put up on the screen in case you're taking notes.

THE LAW IS NOW INTERNAL

The Law Is Now Internal. It's interesting when God gave the law to the children of Israel, initially the Ten Commandments, He wrote on tablets of stone. And I don't think that was any mistake. I don't think that was just because, well, out here in the wilderness, there's nothing but rock. Alright, grab a couple of rocks. Let's put some laws on those puppies. That's not the reason.

There's something inherently understandable about the law being on tablets of stone because they're hard, but they're also external to you and to I. It's like, here they are, rock hard, and you look at them, and you read them, and that's all good and fine. But through the law of the Spirit, the law, and in fact, the law giver, shook, (Pastor Paul motions and points both his hands to his chest) has now gone inward, has gone inside of us.

The Spirit of God, the One who gave the law, is now living within us. This is prophesied in the Book of Jeremiah. It goes like this. It's the 31st chapter of Jeremiah. I even highlighted a part of it there, but He says,

Jeremiah 31:31, 33-34 (ESV)

*“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ... this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: **I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.** And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”*

*“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ... this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: **I will put (look at this, I will put) my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.** (not on tablets of stone, you guys! On their hearts, I'm going to write my law on their hearts) And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”*

That's a prophecy of the New Covenant, the New Covenant that we're under. Not the Mosaic Law, the New Covenant through Jesus Christ. And what are the characteristics of this New Covenant?

God says, I'm going to take my law and I'm going to write it on their hearts. How is He going to do that? By taking His Holy Spirit and indwelling each one of us who come to faith in Jesus Christ. That's what happens when we trust Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins, we make Him Savior of our lives. He comes to live within. His Holy Spirit comes...

We just think, well, when the Holy Spirit came to live inside my heart, I was born again, thank you, Jesus. And we stopped there. We stopped with just being born again. No, it's so much more.

Now you have received the person of God, within your heart, who lives within you, who now speaks dynamically to you about all things related to morality, decisions, concerns, problems, ups, downs, everything. Can you imagine if the

Word of God were to contain the answer to every single question or issue of life? Who you're to marry? What you're to do about your marriage as it is. What you're to do about your job, your concerns about life, how to spend your money. I mean, and whether to take that job in that other town or whatever.

We have so many questions and you can't go to the Bible and find an answer in the sense of, thou shalt not take that job, sort of a thing. That's just nowhere written in the law that you can just go and, or. I mean, good grief, if God covered everything related to every decision of life and concern or whatever, the world couldn't contain all the books that would hold this stuff. And you and I would probably be exhausted looking up answers.

So what has He done? He's taken the law giver and actually indwells in our hearts. Comes to live inside of us so that you and I can go to Him, say, Lord, I need your direction. I need your Spirit to guide me, to lead me in the way that I am to go. I need you, Lord, to tell me what to do here. And what about this? Is this okay? And is...

And the Lord is constantly speaking and many times without words and there's this work of the Spirit when we get into things that we know we shouldn't be involved in, there's this conviction of the Spirit, right?

The Holy Spirit convicts us and says, that's just not a good situation for you to be in. Maybe you're involved in a conversation with a few people and eventually that conversation turns sour and gossipy and the Spirit begins to speak to you internally saying, it's time to remove yourself from this because this is going bad.

Now, it doesn't mean you and I can't grieve the Holy Spirit, we can't resist the Holy Spirit because we can, but He's speaking. The question is, are we listening?

There's another reason why the life of the Spirit and the following the law of the Spirit is so much more superior to any kind of an external written law is, and I'll put this one on here too. It's because,

THROUGH HIS SPIRIT GOD NOW GIVES US THE DESIRE AND THE ABILITY TO OBEY HIM.

Through His Spirit, God now doesn't just give us the law, He gives, I mean internally, He gives us the desire and the ability to obey the law.

And by the way, this is something no external law could ever accomplish. Let me show you a passage from Philippians chapter 2 and this is such a wonderful passage.

Philippians 2:13 (NIV)

...for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

...for it is God who works in you to will (and that means desire) and to act (right? Which means to do) according to his good purpose.

It is God who works in you to desire and to do according to His good purpose. You see, the Old Testament law could never do that. The Old Testament law was wonderful at setting a standard, and it did. When it told us that we should not commit murder, there was a standard given. There was a line drawn in the sand. Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. And all these standards that were laid out for you and I in the Word of God, but the law could do nothing to give us a desire to keep those things or to give us the power to do those things. It could do zero.

And yet this is what the life of the Spirit is able to accomplish in our lives. God will now give me the desire. God will give me the ability to walk after His Word. Again, the Old Testament law has no ability to do that.

So what's the answer to, you and I for, we don't follow the Mosaic law. We're not under the law. What are we under? The law of the Spirit. What does that mean? It means listen.

It means listen to the Holy Spirit and obey Him. And you'll not only walk in liberty and freedom, but you'll walk in holiness when you do. If I were ever to be asked, for my personal opinion, for whatever it's worth, and it's not worth much, as to what Christians today are most deficient in, I would have to say, we are most deficient in hearing the voice of the Spirit, listening to the Spirit. I believe, hands down, that is where we fail the most as Christians. And I'm talking even in Spirit led churches.

There seems to be these polar opposites you have in the body of Christ. On the one hand, you over here, you got what they, and they'll call themselves Spirit led churches. Sometimes they'll even put it on their sign; a Spirit led church. And often what's going on there is nonsense and has so little to do with being led by the Spirit as the other polar opposite where they're not even pretending to be led by the Spirit.

In fact, they've eased the Holy Spirit out of a job by, coming up with rules and regulations and, we've seen the church flop back and forth to these two extremes many, many, many times over the years.

And some of you, like I said before, you were raised in legalistic churches where, they just came up with rules, it was an easy thing. We don't really need the Holy Spirit because we're just going to give you a rule. Don't ever go to movies. Christians don't dance. Some of you guys were raised that way. And, they didn't even explain it. They just said, Christians don't dance. And they say it in a way like, you're an idiot if you even question me on that. Right? We just don't. We don't go to movies and we don't dance. We don't, and they've got a list of things that we don't do.

Who needs the Holy Spirit? I got rules! I got rules to live by, right? Yeah! Do you know, it's so constricting when we put rules on people, we literally hinder their ability to grow up and mature and listen to God's voice. One of the biggest dangers for me as a pastor is when people come to me and want counsel. Because there's a real temptation for me to give them an answer when they really ought to be going to God for that answer.

But people don't expect to go to God and to get an answer. That's probably one of the reasons they don't get one. But the point is, they'll come to me and say, pastor Paul, I got a situation coming up, and sometimes it's very practical, like, I got a job offer, or I got this, or I got that. Pastor Paul, what do you think about that?

My response should be in, like, all those cases, should be, well, what is God telling you? What is He saying to you? Well, I've been reading my Bible and trying to find. No, no, no. I'm saying, what is God saying to you? How is He speaking to you about the potential of this move? And I know by the response I get, which is usually a glassy eyed stare that they don't understand what I'm talking about, or if they do understand it, it didn't dawn on them to ask.

So you see the issue, we've become people that just want to be led and guided by rules. Give me a rule. Just give me a rule and I'll follow it. Tell me what you think I need to do. And you know what? There are way too many counselors out there who are ready and willing to tell you right now what they think you should or shouldn't do.

Never mind ever asking the question, what's God telling you? Well, God doesn't speak to me. I've heard that one many times. Do you think it might be because you're not listening? I mean, isn't it interesting? We always blame God. When

there was a lack of communication between us and God, we just instantly go, Oh, He's not talking. I don't know. I'm trying to look. He's not talking.

And, it's like, wait a minute. Are you that quick to charge God with, His side of the issue and just, well, could it possibly be that you and I have been raised in a culture where we expect quick answers right now, and we're not willing to sit and wait.

How many times in the Bible do you think it says, wait on the Lord? You ever counted? You ought to. All the times it speaks of waiting. Wait on the Lord, be quiet, and wait on the Lord, and do not fret. Over, and over, and over again. But Pastor, you don't understand. I don't have time. And that's where we sit, isn't it?

We sit in this place where we just, we've lost the ability to even just sit in His presence and listen. I want to show you another passage from Romans. This is a little bit deeper into Romans 8.

Romans 8:5-6 (ESV)

*For those who live according to the flesh
set their minds on the things of the flesh,
but those who live according to the Spirit
set their minds on the things of the Spirit.
For to set the mind on the flesh is death,
but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.*

*For those who live according to the flesh
set their minds on the things of the flesh,
but those who live according to the Spirit
set their minds on the things of the Spirit.
For to set the mind on the flesh is death,
but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.*

This is a fascinating passage and I want to leave it up for just a bit here. Because it speaks of two different mindsets and the conditions or the results, if you will, of those two mindsets.

Notice here that you have the mindset of the flesh, meaning it is focused on the flesh. The desire is for the things of the flesh. And you'll notice that the result of that is death. Okay? Why?

Well, because to be focused on the flesh is to be dead to the life of the Spirit. If a person is just completely and totally focused on the flesh, that means they basically forgotten about, or they're ignoring, or neglecting the whole concept of

the life of the Spirit. The life of the Spirit is where life exists. The life of the flesh or the focused on the flesh is where there is death. Okay?

The other mindset that he talks about is the mindset of the Spirit, which he says, “*is life and peace.*” Again, why? Because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life, and He brings peace into our lives when we focus our attention on Him.

But I want you to notice that whole idea of focusing your mind on the Spirit and not on the flesh, is given in that second to the last line of what you see the scripture there. It says,

Romans 8:5-6 (ESV)

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

“...*but to set the mind on the Spirit (he says) is life and peace.*” That's the thing I really want to emphasize with you today, “...*to set the mind,*” “...*to set the mind.*”

How do I set my mind on the life of the Spirit? How do I do that? Well, it's the exact same way I set my mind on the life of the flesh. By going after it, by running after it. By looking at something that I want and saying, I'm going to have that thing. The same thing with the life of the Spirit.

Now here's where somebody might have a problem with it. They'll say but pastor, here's the problem. You see, I desire the things of the flesh, I just don't have a desire for the things of the Spirit. So how can I set my mind on things I don't really desire?

We come back to Philippians chapter 2 that says, listen.

Philippians 2:13 (NIV)

...for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

...for it is God who works in you to (desire, which is to) will and (then to walk out or) to act (out or do) according to his good purpose.

You say, well I just don't have that going on in my life you say here this passage says that God works in us to desire I just don't see that happening in my life Have you asked Him? What about that made you think that was just going to be automatic? This is what pastor Bill talked about last week. Remember? Those of you who were here heard his message. It was a great message.

Bill Holdridge shared last week, he said, he got saved in 1967 at Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, but then he was up and down in his walk with the Lord for a few years. Turned out about 1972, 73, he was pretty much miserable because he wasn't, he hadn't really made that, that determination, I'm going to walk with Jesus. It was just, it was very off and on.

And a brother comes up to him and says, brother Bill, how you doing? He says, not very good. And he said, this guy reached into his pocket to get his New Testament to whip it out, share some verses and Bill said, just leave it there. I know what I need. Let's pray.

And Bill said he knew, he knew what he needed. But he was really scared to pray a prayer of rededication to the Lord. You know why? He had failed so many times. Can you guys relate? You guys know what it's like to be a Christian, and you want to do the Lord's will, but you keep failing?

You keep messing up, and pretty soon you just get discouraged with yourself like, man alive, what's this thing all about? Bill told about how he had made a determination in his heart. God, I'll do this, I'll pray, and I'm going to give my heart to you, but you know what you've got to do?

You've got to come through, and you've got to give me the desire and the ability to walk out Your Word. You've got to give me the desire for the things of the Spirit. He didn't even know about Philippians, chapter 2. He told that in his message last week. He said, then I came upon Philippians years later, and I thought, hey, it's in the Bible. Seriously, suddenly he realizes it's right there in God's Word. You and I can ask.

We can say, Lord, you know what? I am a real fleshly creature and I confess that to you right now. Right here, right now. I am governed by the flesh. My desires are for the flesh. My thoughts are pretty much holy for the flesh. But I know that's a life of death and I don't want to run after that.

I know that the life of the Spirit is life and peace. I know that the following heart after the Spirit, being led by the Spirit, is life and peace. But I got to admit to you God, I'm not there. That's just not in my heart.

You think that surprises God to hear that from you? You think He's like, shocked that somehow you told Him something He didn't know? No. He knew exactly what was going on before you even mentioned a word of it.

So what's wrong with you and I simply going before God saying, you know what God, I just don't have the goods. I see in Your Word that a life followed after the Spirit is life and peace, and I see that a life running after the flesh is death.

I get that. I believe that. I believe that's true. But Lord, this whole life of the Spirit business, I just, it's just not in me, so I need you to give me the desire, the will, and the ability to do, to walk out your good pleasure. To live my life for you.

Guys, that's the how, and this is what I've been excited to bring to you at some particular point, the how. Because for all these weeks in Galatians we've been talking about the what. And the what, is the law versus grace.

But the question that's been looming over our heads all this time is, how then do we live if we don't live under the law? And the how is, we live under the Spirit. We live led by the Spirit.

But I don't have a desire. He'll give you that too. Pray and ask. Ask Him to give you a desire to follow hard after Him.

I believe He answers those prayers, and I believe that's the key. And I believe that this is one area where we as Christians, we got to get back to square one. We got to get back to listening to God.

Can I just encourage you when you're talking to somebody and they're sharing something with you about what's going on in their life? Can I just encourage you to look them in the eye and say, what's God telling you? What is God speaking to your heart about that? What's He saying to you?

And if they say, well, I don't really know, say, well, I'll pray with you. Let's pray right now. Let's pray that God would speak to your heart and that you'd hear Him that we'll be listening.

People, the Holy Spirit still speaks today and He's got a lot to say, if we're just willing to listen.