

***Keeping in Step with the Spirit (Part 1)***  
***Galatians 5:16-21***

**Introduction:** Jesus told His followers in John 16:7, *"It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you."* Jesus did go away. He has sent the Helper. This is to our advantage. Hopefully, over the next couple of weeks we will have more insight into how this can be as we focus on our life in the Spirit. In Galatians 5:16 Paul speaks of "walking by the Spirit"; in verse 18 he mentions being "led by the Spirit"; and in verse 25 Paul speaks of "keeping in step with the Spirit" (NIV). Just like the original disciples "followed" Jesus, we are to follow the promptings and leadings of the Holy Spirit. This chapter tells us much of what the Spirit is doing so that we'll recognize how to keep in step with Him.

**Opening Discussion:** In light of what Jesus says in John 16:7, why might it be to our advantage that Jesus left earth and sent the Holy Spirit?

**Read Galatians 5:16-21**

1. How does Paul describe the relationship between the flesh and the Spirit?
2. What does it mean to "walk by the Spirit" (v. 16)?
3. According to this passage, what are some signs that one is not walking by the Spirit?
4. Based on what Paul teaches, are we to conclude that anytime we sin we have failed to walk by the Spirit?

Steve said:

Perhaps as I talked through the deeds of the flesh you identified one or more items that characterize your life (at times anyway). There is a certain power in actually "naming" those things deeds of the flesh. For example, if you get frustrated and yell at somebody, you might think, "Wow, I'm having a bad day." But what about calling it what it is: "That outburst of anger was a deed of my flesh." Naming some action or attitude a deed of the flesh is a way of employing biblical categories so that you can address it biblically. . . . Once we identify something as a deed of the flesh, our response should be repentance, turning from that sin and turning to God in faith. You can't really repent from having a bad day; you can certainly repent from an outburst of anger.

5. How might it help you in your battle with the flesh to actually name your wrong attitudes or actions as a deed of the flesh?

Steve said:

If some area of the flesh has a death grip on your life in some way, you might have a hard time believing that the Holy Spirit can actually make your life different. Maybe you struggle with some addiction or you may find that your flesh always sabotages relationships with others (enmities, strife, factions, etc.). Perhaps you know your flesh so well that you think it's highly unlikely that you'll ever be different. But what about the possibility of knowing the Holy Spirit so well that you have the faith to trust that His influence is stronger than your flesh? Paul says, "Walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." Walking by the Spirit is not an exercise in willpower. It's a life of conscious dependence on the Spirit within you to do what God has revealed He will do. One way to express this dependence/faith is through prayer. We simply ask God that the Holy Spirit would fill our lives and lead us into godliness. We simply ask that the Spirit would empower us to avoid the deeds of the flesh.

6. What do you think it means to live a "life of conscious dependence on the Spirit within you"?
7. As we struggle to put to death the deeds of the flesh, what's the Holy Spirit part and what's our part?
8. In what area of your life would you like to ask God for the Holy Spirit to fill your life and empower you to avoid the deeds of the flesh so that you might live in godliness?