

FLESH VS. SPIRIT

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Galatians 5: 15 -26

When we are “filled” with the Spirit we are controlled by the Holy Spirit. The result of being controlled by the Holy Spirit is “Occupation with Christ” which produces the “Fruits of the Spirit.” The Holy Spirit produces the fruit in us, for us and for the benefit of others – both believers and non believers. The result of fruit production is God is glorified and man is benefited.

Our sanctification (set apart) is permanent and experiential. It is permanent in that we are set apart as children of God and sons of God (John 1:12; Galatians 4:4) by believing in Christ. At the point of faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit baptizes us into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27) and permanently indwells us (II Corinthians 5:14-21; 6:16). Both “In Christ” and “God in us” are synonyms referring to our permanent position, our permanent relationship to God.. Because God is unchanging we cannot lose our placement in the body of Christ as believers. God doesn’t take back what He gives us in Christ.

When the Bible speaks of experiential sanctification, it refers to our “walk” in life – in the filling of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16). Every day, every hour, every minute, we are in spiritual warfare. Now, don’t be alarmed, don’t be overwhelmed - the battle is the Lord’s (II Chronicles 20:15), and here is how we win each battle minute by minute: Name your sins (II Corinthians 7:1; 1 John 1:9). When we confess (acknowledge) our sins, God restores us to fellowship which means God is back in control. God is on the Throne of self - not us.

In (I Thessalonians 5:16-24), Paul tells us to: “rejoice evermore” and “pray without ceasing” and “in everything give thanks” for (here is the reason) “this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning each one of us.” Paul says “Quench not the Spirit.” We quench the Spirit when we sin. We must confess sin and God restores us to fellowship.

In verse 20 Paul tells us to look forward with great anticipation to the future return of the Lord when he said “Despise not prophesyings” (cherish the promise of His return).” “Prove all things” (know doctrine – good from false doctrine) and “hold fast to that which is good” (every word that proceed from the mouth of God - Bible Doctrine). “Abstain from evil.” “And the very God of peace (filling of the Spirit and Bible doctrine gives us peace) sanctify you wholly” (here is our experiential sanctification – “walking in the Spirit” and “waiting for our Savior’s return” staying in Scripture which keeps us from evil until he returns); “and I pray God your whole spirit and

soul (notice Paul distinguishes between soul and spirit as two separate entities here) and body (which means the believer is trichotomous) we be preserved blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.” God called us to salvation and set us apart for His service (experiential sanctification). As a result our position (permanent sanctification) is guaranteed by “who will do it” which is God Himself.

From these powerful verses we learn about our eternal security as we walk in the Spirit. Occupation with Christ is our walk with Christ in the filling of the Spirit. We learn that God has designed a perfect plan for His Children until He comes and/or until we are called home. I call this the **“PPG” – Pre-Designed Plan of God or the Pre-Designed Plan of Grace**. See also Galatians 2: 15-20; and 3:22).

Paul compares the “works of the flesh” to the “fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:19-21: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness (immorality, impurity, sensuality - lust), idolatry, sorcery, hatred, wrath, wrath (outbursts of anger), factions (self seeking – never satisfied), seditions (insurrection against authority), heresies (contrary to truth), envying, drunkenness, revelings (carousing), and the like; of which I forewarned you that they who do practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

You will note that people who practice these things are under the law (still in the flesh – unsaved) which means they are not under Grace. However, even believers out of fellowship (carnal) will do these very things, but the difference is the “position” of the believer compared to the unbeliever. The believer is in, literally under Christ – crucified with Christ. The unbeliever is in the world under the law – not saved. So, you can know when you are in fellowship or out of fellowship by your thinking (works of the flesh) and your actions (works of the flesh). We are actually in contradiction to God when we are out of fellowship, thinking and operating in the flesh. Here is the contrast to the flesh (out of fellowship), we appear exactly the same as the unbeliever because we revert to thinking the same as the unbeliever. When we are out of fellowship our flesh is in control (the self) and we will do the things of the flesh. When we are in fellowship (sins acknowledged to God) we are controlled by the very filling ministry of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Holy Spirit produces the fruits of the Spirit and this is when God is glorified and the believer is blessed. When our thinking is in line with Bible Doctrine and our sins confessed, we are then and only then occupied with Christ because we are in fellowship with Him. Occupation with our Savior and Lord is the most satisfying peace we will ever enjoy this side of heaven. As a matter of (doctrine) we literally “walk” with God when we “walk in the filling of the Spirit”.

When Christ is in control of our faculties He produces the PPG in us and through us. God does the work of Salvation and the work of living the Christian life. By contrast, here is the

manifestation of the Christian life known as the fruits of the Spirit (notice they are the production of the Spirit”) in the filling of the Spirit: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy peace, long-suffering (patience), gentleness (kindness), goodness, faith, meekness (humility) self-control (temperance); against such there is no law.”

God’s PPG is designed to protect us from ourselves, the devil and the world by the inculcation of Bible Doctrine; by naming (confessing) sin; and following the indwelling control of the Holy Spirit. Stop and read your thoughts. If they do not align with Bible Doctrine (stored in your soul) and if you are not manifesting the fruits if the Spirit in your life (thinking and application) then you are out of fellowship – you are in the flesh - you are in control, not God.

God does and will lead us through life if we will give Him control. “Yielding” means 1 John 1:9. Please look it up meditate on it. Meditate on this study. Your blessings in eternity are waiting for you. But, you must practice the daily mechanics of the filling control of God in your thinking and life along with the daily intake of Bible Doctrine. Yielding is not something you do it is 1 John 1:9 (name your sins). The result is God in control executing God’s plan for your life. I repeat - naming sin is simply acknowledging your sins as they occur. Your Christian walk with God begins and ends with your thinking. Is God in control, or are you? Does God sit on the throne of self, or do you? The Spirit knows!

This study of the “Flesh verses the Spirit” requires that you go over it again and again. Your success in this life and your rewards for eternity depend on your utilization of God’s Divine operating assets as taught in this study. Your advance to maturity in the Christian life rests with your willingness to follow God’s plan. Therefore, practice and master the mechanics. Step 1). Study of Scripture; 2). Naming your sins; 3). Application of Bible Doctrine with every step you take, practice what you learn from God’s Word daily. Happy studying!