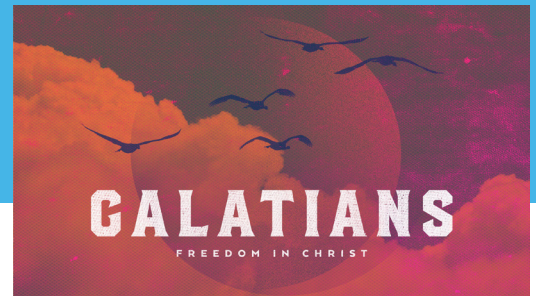


Discussion Questions

August 2, 2026



Galatians 5:16-18 - Walk By the Spirit

In Galatians 5, Paul addresses a church that knew what love required but was still biting, devouring, provoking, and envying one another over who truly belonged. Rather than giving them more instructions, Paul tells them to walk by the Spirit, a command with a promise attached, the desires of the flesh may still show up but they no longer have to cross the finish line. The Spirit isn't a weaker force that grows only if we feed it. He is God himself, already at work opposing the flesh, reshaping our desires, and producing the character of Jesus in us. Walking by the Spirit is our active participation in what he's already doing, not a way to earn our place in God's family.

1. Think back to the challenge from the sermon's opening, naming one person God placed in front of you and taking a step toward sacrificial love. Without giving specific details, how did that actually go compared with how you hoped it would go?
2. Read Galatians 5:13-15. What words does Paul use to describe how the Galatians were treating one another, and what deeper conflict over belonging was actually driving that behavior?
3. Read Galatians 5:16-18. What command and promise do you see in verse 16? What's the practical difference between experiencing a sinful craving and letting it cross the finish line through your words or actions?
4. The sermon challenged the popular idea that the flesh and the Spirit are like two equally matched animals competing inside us, whichever one you feed wins. Based on verse 17, why is that picture misleading, and how does it change your understanding of temptation to know the Spirit is God himself, actively opposing what's destroying you?
5. Temptation often attaches itself to a legitimate longing, like the desire to be loved, known, secure, or comforted, and turns it into a demand. Can you think of an example of how a good longing can quietly become a demand that excuses sinful behavior?
6. Read Galatians 4:6 and 5:18. The Spirit cries "Abba, Father" within us and assures us we already belong before we've fixed anything. How does that order, belonging first and obedience second, change the way you relate to God after a week where you failed to love well?
7. Read Galatians 5:22-23 and 6:8. Which quality of the Spirit's fruit do you most need him to grow in you right now? Keeping in mind that grace opposes earning, not effort, what's one concrete way you can "sow to the Spirit" this week without trying to earn God's acceptance.

Optional Closing

Have each person name one area where they want the Spirit's help. Close by praying that the group would rest in already belonging to God and take the next faithful step of love.

Galatians 5:16–18 (NIV)

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Galatians 5:15 (NLT)

If you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another.

Galatians 5:16 (NIV)

So I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Today's sermon in one sentence

The Spirit is already at work in us, opposing the flesh, reshaping our desires, and producing the life of Jesus. Walking by the Spirit is our active participation in what he is already doing.

Galatians 5:16 (NIV)

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and **you will not gratify the desires [cravings] of the flesh.**

Galatians 5:17 (NIV)

For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other...

Galatians 5:17 (NLT)

The [flesh] sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires.

**Galatians 5:17 (NIV)**

For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other...

Which desire are we yielding to?**Galatians 5:24 (NLT)**

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them.

Galatians 5:17 (NIV)

For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other...

Galatians 4:6 (NLT)

And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, 'Abba, Father.'

The Spirit is already at work in us.

Opposing the flesh.

Reshaping our desires.

Producing the life of Jesus.

Walking by the Spirit is our active participation in what he is already doing.

Galatians 5:17b (NIV)

They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

Galatians 5:18 (NLT)

But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are NOT under obligation to the law of Moses.

Galatians 5:14 (NIV)

the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Galatians 5:23 (NLT)

against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:26 (NLT)

Let us NOT become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.

What does walking by the Spirit actually look like?

Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

The Spirit is already at work. Walking is our active participation.

Dallas Willard - The Great Omission

Grace is not opposed to effort. It is opposed to earning.

Galatians 6:8 (NIV)

Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

When you read Scripture this week

Begin with this question:

What does this passage reveal about who God is, what he has done, or what he desires?

Then ask:

Because that is true what does love require of me toward the person in front of me?

1 Corinthians 11:23-24 (NLT)

On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

1 Corinthians 11:25 (NLT)

In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant between God and his people, an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it.'