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Led by the Spirit, Galatians 5:16-26

By Aaron Shamp

Introduction

- One of the most unnerving parts of parenthood is leaving the hospital after the birth. “Are there instructions?”
 - When you’re born into the Christian life you aren’t given a policy manual. Instead, you’re given the Holy Spirit.
 - The Holy Spirit initiates the new birth and grows us into maturity.

He Leads You Into Conflict

- The next two weeks we’re looking at two key phrases about maturing in the Christian life. Those phrases are “led by the Spirit” and “live by/walk by the Spirit.”
 - One is more passive and the other active, but they are both necessary.
- **Point:** The Spirit will lead you into conflict.
 - He will lead you into conflict against the flesh (5:16-18).
 - *The Christian life involves struggling. We are engaged in a war against the flesh.*
 - He will lead you into conflict against the the world.
 - Being led by the Spirit means not compromising against pressure groups. Peter was tempted to but Paul could not. He realized the price of compromise was too great, and so he resisted.
- Why does he have to lead you into conflict?
 - Imagine these Christians still living in a pagan culture. Do you still eat the food at grandma’s birthday?
 - C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*: “We want cattle who can finally become food; He wants servants who can finally become sons... He leaves the creature

to stand up on its own legs-to carry out from the will alone duties which have lost all relish. It is during such trough periods, much more than during the peak periods, that it is growing into the sort of creature He wants it to be.”

He Leads You Into Service

- **Point:** The Spirit will lead you into service.
 - His leading doesn't bring you to self-fulfillment but to selfless service to others (5:13-15). *Love is the greatest proof of the Spirit in your life, and love will demonstrate itself in service to the covenantal community.*
 - How much of your Christian walk is inward focused?
- I believe many of us going through periods of struggle because we become to fixated on the self.
 - Your ups and downs, your prayer requests, your needs, your desires, your anxieties, etc, etc, etc...
 - The Spirit will lead us to introspection, but not introspection alone!

He Leads You to Walk with God

- **Point:** The Spirit will lead you to walk with God.
 - Paul makes a remarkable statement in Gal. 4:8-10. He suggested that turning back to the law is identical to returning to paganism.
 - When Christ established the new covenant the old ceremonial laws became dead in the mind of God. Rules can be helpful. But in principle, we do not live by rules we live by the Spirit. This was foretold in Jeremiah 31:31-34.
 - “Look, the days are coming... when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. 32 This one will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt... 33 “Instead, this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days... I will put my teaching within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my

people. 34 No longer will one teach his neighbor or his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know me, from the least to the greatest of them" — this is the Lord's declaration. "For I will forgive their iniquity and never again remember their sin."

- Paul explained an external force has been replaced by internal power (5:1).
- Paul describes a life lead by the Spirit beautifully in Gal. 2:20-21.
 - Imagine the millions of Christians around the world and the billions of intricacies of their lives. The Holy Spirit is leading all of these Christians to lead them to glory.
- Are you walking in slavery to the flesh or to the law? Or are you walking with God by the leading of the Spirit in the freedom of the gospel?

End Notes