

## How to Overcome Carnality, Part 1 - Galatians 5:13-18 – October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017

- Today's teaching will be part one of a series I've titled, "How to Overcome Carnality."
- I have to confess that I've really been looking forward to teaching this portion of scripture here in the last part of chapter five.
- This for a number of reasons, chief of which is it contains powerful and practical application related to living our Christian lives.

- What I love about God's Word is that we're not just told what we're to do; we're given the power of the Holy Spirit so as to do it.
- "God's callings are God's enabling's." In other words, God enables us to do that which He's called and commanded us to do.
- This is why I'm fond of the text before us today, such that, we have the how of the Holy Spirit to do the what of the Holy Word.

### 1. Humbly serve and love one another – (Verses 13-15)

13 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. 14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 15 If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

- Here, Paul is saying that in order to not use our freedom to indulge the flesh, we're to serve one another humbly in love instead.
- He goes onto explain why saying that the entire law is fulfilled in keeping just one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."
- Then, he warns them if they bite and devour each other, it's just a matter of time before they will be destroyed by each other.

- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the most, if not the most, destructive forces within the church, this has to be it.
- If Satan can get a church to turn on each other and start backbiting and gossiping about one other, they will destroy each other.
- Perhaps we need look no further for the reason why the devil has been met with success vis-à-vis carnality amongst Christians.

1 Corinthians 3:3 (NKJV) — 3 for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?

- While Paul addresses this later on in the chapter, I think we'd do well to take a closer look at what I'll call catastrophic carnality.
- Namely, the catastrophe that always ensues when the carnality of envy, striving, and divisions takes up residence in a church.
- Sadly, many a Christian, and the church with them, has had their lives just devastated having been on the receiving end of this.

- The question becomes one of why the carnal striving and divisions can be so deadly, dangerous, and destructive to a church.
- I'm keenly aware that I run the risk of offering an oversimplification when I suggest this, but simply put, it brings about death.
- This is what the Apostle Paul said to the church in Rome as it relates to the Spirit giving life, but the flesh bringing about death.

Romans 8:5–11 -- 5 Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. 6 The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. 7 The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8 Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. 9 You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. 10 But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. 11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

### 2. Stay busy in and be led by the Spirit – (Verses 16-18)

16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 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. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

- Again the what we're to do is packaged with the how we're to do it in that we won't gratify carnal desires if we walk by the Spirit.
- In other words, if we're in step with, busy in and led by the Spirit, we won't have time to, nor will we be able to gratify the flesh.
- This because, as Paul says, the Spirit and the flesh are diametrically opposed to each other, and as such, it's one or the other.

- One would think that understanding this would settle this once and for all, however, it's an easier said than done sort of thing.
- By that I mean, walking in sync with the Spirit is easier said than done by virtue of the conflict and even war between the two.
- Notice in verse seventeen where Paul says the Spirit is contrary to the flesh, and that the two are in conflict with each other.

- Now the question becomes, how do we overcome the carnal lusts of the flesh in this battle? Jesus answers this in Matthew 26.

Matthew 26:36–42 (NIV) — 36 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." 39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." 40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. 41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." 42 He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."