

## How to Overcome Carnality, Part 3 - Galatians 5:22-26 – November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017

- Today's teaching will be part three of a series I've titled, "How to Overcome Carnality."
- What I love about this particular chapter here in God's Word is that we have the "what" of God's Word packaged with the "how."
- In other words, not only are we told "what" we're to do, we're also told "how" we're going to be able to do what we're told to do.

- The Apostle Paul, by the Spirit of God knows the problem of carnality in the church must be dealt with in a very practical way.
- As such, woven into the fabric of our text, are very practical ways in which we as Christians can overcome the lusts of the flesh.
- Because it's been two weeks since we were in our study of Galatians, it would be good to quickly revisit the first three ways.

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

- 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.

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

- What Paul is saying is if we're in step with, busy in and led by the Spirit, we won't have time to, nor be able to gratify the flesh.

### 3. Starve the lion of the flesh – (Verses 19-21)

- In this gnarly list of the acts of the flesh, Paul lists things like sexual immorality to discord and orgies and everything in between.

### 4. Feed the lamb of the Spirit – (Verses 22-26)

- Here, the Apostle Paul contrasts the works or acts of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit, which is love. Notice it's fruit not fruits.
- I point this out because the fruit is love, from which come peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
- It's important to understand that this word love in the Greek is agape, which is one of four different words used to define love.

- Because this is an unconditional and supernatural love that only comes from God, the expression of love is also supernatural.
- This is a supernatural joy and a supernatural peace that Paul writing to the Philippians says surpasses human understanding.
- This is why the fruit of the Spirit is the only way to satisfy the longing of our hearts. Try as we may, the flesh will never satisfy.

- I would submit that Satan is the master counterfeiter in the sense that he perverts love with the cheapened substitute of lust.
- So too is this true with pure joy. Satan will seek to counterfeit the joy of the Lord with the cheap substitute of worldly pleasure.
- The truth of the matter is not only will these cheap substitutes never fill the void in our lives; they actually leave us even emptier.

- I'll take it a step further and suggest that we have an irony of all ironies such that feeding the flesh is what ends up starving us.
- In other words, the more I feed the lusts of the flesh, the hungrier and thirstier I become for that which is able to satisfy my soul.
- Conversely, the more I feed the Spirit, the more satiated I will become, which in turn curbs my appetite for the lusts of the flesh.

- You'll forgive the simplicity with which I say this, but if you feed it, it will grow. Perhaps better said, what you feed is what grows.
- While I realize that this is a firm grasp of the obvious, the simple and vital truth of this cannot be overstated in the Christian life.
- Here's the truth, I'll either feed the lusts of the flesh, which will grow strong in my life or feed the Spirit and bear fruit in my life.

- There's something else here that is important to point out and it has to do with the contrast between the word works and fruit.
- The reason I point this out is because works requires much effort and sweat to produce, whereas fruit requires time to grow.
- Where there is work, there will be pressure, stress, and the drive to produce, whereas with fruit, there is beauty and tranquility.

"It's important to realize that God doesn't come to His factory looking for products. He comes to His garden to enjoy its fruit. The gospel of grace invites us to leave behind the smog and pressure of a factory-like life of works and instead bear the fruit that God desires to see in the garden of our lives. ...Look at the luscious fruit hanging on a peach tree. The peaches aren't out there struggling and working day by day trying to get ripe; all they have to do is hang in there. Ripening is the natural product of relationship. As long as they are abiding, they are going to bring forth sweet fruit." "Why Grace Changes Everything" Pastor Chuck Smith.

John 15:4-5 - 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Matthew 7:16-20 - 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

John 13:35 (NKJV) — 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

- Here's where I'm going with this in closing, the fruit of love on the tree of our lives is how we'll be known as disciples of Jesus.
- If the fruit of love is how we'll be known as Christians, then we need to ask ourselves, how is that can we grow the fruit of love.
- The answer is to abide in Christ by feeding the Spirit, which is how we mature in Christ and grow spiritually. It's the only way.

Matthew 4:4 But he answered, "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Romans 10:17 - So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Acts 2:42 - They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.