

(13) For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

(16) But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

(19) Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

(22) But the Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Think on these things:

- 1) When you were called to receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, what did that give you (v.13a)?

Freedom (better, ‘liberation’) from the penalty and power of sin.

- 2) V.13 contains a very important teaching for all Christians. We are not saved from sin --- to sin some more --- because now we know how to be forgiven (Romans 6:1-2, 6-11). Paul tries to explain in other passages that we are actually to be “dead” to sin and its pull. Rather than sinning, being delivered from sin and experiencing freedom should lead us to do what (v.13b)? What if this is a hard change for you?

We are to use our ‘liberation’ from sin to serve other people because of the love God puts in our hearts. --- When God saves us, He equips us to do His will. Phil. 4:13: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” If God wants me to serve others, He’ll help change my attitude so that I willingly take on servanthood to my Christian brethren!

- 3) What happens when I focus on other people and their failures before God (v.15)?

We are likely to attack and consume one another (this is a divisive outlook in life --- we always seem to find what we’re looking for...!) If I want to find bad in others, it won’t be that hard!

- 4) What command does Paul give that is to help us walk away from sinful living (v.16)?

Walk (live life) daily in communion (communication and relationship) with the Holy Spirit!

- 5) There is a war going on inside of us (see Romans 7:17-24). What two things are battling for control of us, and what is the practical result Paul says happens?

God's Spirit is battling with my spirit (fleshly desires), and the battle keeps me from doing the things I want or ought to do.

- 6) If God's Spirit is in control of us, what place does the Law have?

We are no longer under the Law. We live on under God's grace!

- 7) From verses 19-21a, what listed item(s) causes you the most problems? **(personal answer)**
You will not be asked to share this aloud, but please write it down as an acknowledgement to yourself. What is the warning of verse 21b? How many times do you have to do this for it to be an appropriate description of you...in God's eyes? Keep in mind whether we are talking before you were saved or after you were saved.

The warning: "If you live like this, doing these things, you cannot expect to inherit God's Kingdom. There is no clear answer to the next Q: How many times...until this becomes a proper description of you in God's sight? (perhaps a lively class discussion). The real key, though, is that these are POST-SALVATION behaviors, wrong things we continue to do after asking God's forgiveness and expressing faith in Jesus.

- 8) What is the "name" of the qualities of life described in vs. 22-23? Notice that the term is not plural; we should look at this like a cluster of grapes that the Holy Spirit works in all believers (remember Jesus' teaching about the vine, John 15:1-8).

The Fruit of the Spirit

- 9) Paul says there is NO law against these qualities being developed by the Holy Spirit within us. Which 1-2 are you best at? Which 1-2 needs more work in your life?

Personal evaluation questions, but not so personal people would be unwilling to share. Try to get folks to identify two they do well, and two they need to work on. Maybe 'prayer partners' would uplift these matters in the week that follows.

- 10) If you belong to Jesus, what do you need to do with your own desires and passions (v.24)?

Nail them to the cross of Jesus (see Col. 2:14).

People and situations I want to pray for this week: