

## Power



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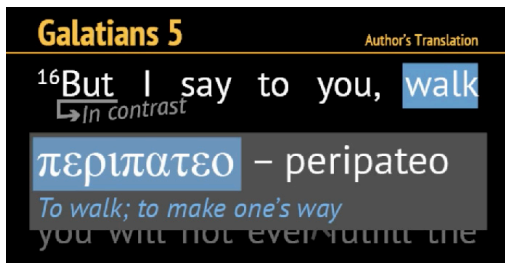
All right. Welcome back. In our last session, we talked about the freedom of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We looked at the thesis of the letter because we want to see the fruits of the Spirit, that spiritual fruit and gospel fiber in light of the context of the entire letter. And so, we can walk through this great thesis that Christ gave Himself for our sins in order to set us free from this present evil age, the present evil age that's marked by legalism on the one hand and living according to your lust on the other. And Paul is going to say throughout this letter, that as long as we're living under the bondage of the law, or according to our own flesh, it leads to basically the opposite of what we see with the fruit of the Spirit. It leads to, rather than love, hate rather than joy, bitterness, and it leads to the community—rather than walking in unity in which God has called us to walk—it leads to this dis-unity, to backbiting and hostility and tension among the others. So what we're going to do now that we've looked at the entire, thesis of Galatians is to look at the context of the fruit of the Spirit in light of its immediate literary context. And so again, if you don't have your Bible, I encourage you to grab it and scroll, or turn to Galatians chapter 5. We'll look at verse 16. In verse 16, Paul says, "But I say." Now this "but" is pointing back to the previous letter, passages in the previous letter. And he's talking about that if you live according to this present evil age, if you live according to the law, if you live according to indulging your flesh, then that's going to lead to that destruction.

### Galatians 5

Author's Translation

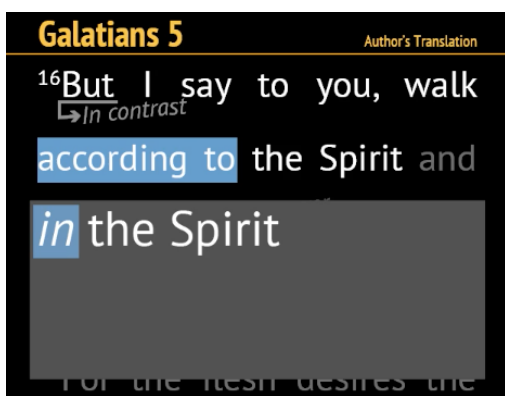
<sup>16</sup>But I say to you, walk  
↳ in contrast  
according to the Spirit and  
you will not <sup>ever</sup> fulfill the  
desires of your sinful nature.

That's going to lead to what Jesus would say in John, that the enemy comes to steal, kill, and destroy. And that's what it looks like to walk according to this present evil age. But Paul gives us this big contrast. In contrast to that, "I say to you," look at it, what does he say? He says, "I say to you, walk according to the Spirit and you will not ever, ever fulfill the desires of your sinful nature. So Paul comes and says, I say to you, walk according to the Spirit. Now, some of your English translations may say "live" and live is a good translation, a good gloss for this word as well. But more



specifically, it's probably better translated as “walk.” As you probably know, walking is a slow deliberate type of movement. So it's interesting. We want Paul to say, Hey, “fly by the Spirit” or “zoom by the Spirit.” But instead Paul comes and says, “Walk by the Spirit.” This idea of walking has a continuous aspect to it. To walk is not just to take a step by the Spirit. It's not, to sit down, but instead to continue to move your feet; it's a continuous action. So Paul is not saying to once and for all walk by the Spirit, but instead continue to walk by the Spirit.

When we lived in Germany, we had gone to Legoland and we spent the entire day at Legoland. When we came back home on the train, the train didn't go to our little village; it was about 10 miles away. So we found a taxi to take me and my four children (at that time), halfway there. But we had to walk five miles at about midnight from halfway to our village. As we were walking—we had been in Legoland all day and all of us were exhausted. Aiden, the one that we call Cheeto, all of a sudden just couldn't stand it anymore. And he declared what all of us were feeling: “My feet hut!” and all of our feet “hut.” But the truth is that even though our feet “hut,” we had to keep going. We weren't home yet. So for Paul, he understands that walking in freedom is not something that just happens. And it's not that God just kind of beams us up into holiness. But instead, we have to continue to walk. And often with this idea of walking by the Spirit, it has this idea of a long obedience. So God calls us to this long obedience of walking, not jumping, not zooming, not flying. One of my favorite Martin Luther King Jr. quotes is that if you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then walk. And if you can't walk, then crawl, but by all means, keep on moving. And for many of us, our feet “hut.” Walking according to the Spirit is not always that easy.



And so Paul's going to say, walk according to the spirit. This word, according to, is a preposition and in the original language prepositions are very, very fluid. There are many different ways that we can translate this. It could be the idea of walk in the spirit. And if that's the case, what Paul is trying to communicate is that once we were in the flesh, once we were in that old age, that old realm, but when Christ gave Himself for us, when Christ died on that cross and we experienced freedom, when God put His Spirit inside of us, that we're no longer in that world anymore; now our neighborhood is in the power of the Spirit and the love, the joy, the fruit of the Spirit, by which that marks. It may be Paul saying, “Hey, don't go back to that old neighborhood, that old sphere, that old realm, but now walk in this new realm in which God has

called you to walk.”

It could be in. It also could have the idea of with. Walk with the Spirit in the sense that often we walk a lonely road and we walk alone. Paul is saying, “No, no, no, no, don’t walk alone.” This is not just kind of pagan moralism, where you pick yourself up by your own bootstraps. Instead, God has given His Spirit to be with you. And so, the Spirit of God is right there with us. We don’t have to do this all by ourselves. It could be in the Spirit. It could be reminding us that God sent His Spirit, as Jesus would say in John 14, that it’s good for Him to go, so that He could send the Spirit of God to be this paraklete to be there, to walk alongside of us.

Or it could be translated as by the spirit. All three of these are true. But by the spirit is that “Hey, it’s not by your power that you can have this freedom, but instead it’s solely by the power of God’s Holy Spirit.” My oldest son, Kennan, the one we call Kenobi, when he became a teenager, I was so excited because I was no longer going to have to mow the yard by myself. So I sent him to go and mow the yard. And about five minutes later, he came, and he had broken our lawnmower. He had pulled the string out. It was like, “Ha.” Anyway, our yard needed mowing. It was about to the point that it needed to be baled. I went and asked my neighbor “Hey, can I use your lawn mower?” And of course, he said, “yes.” So I’m in Arkansas. It’s like 105 degrees—one of Dante’s levels of Hades is being in the deep South during the summertime—and I had to mow the yard. And for some reason, my neighbor’s mower didn’t push as well as my mower. What usually would take me half the time, took me double the time to push it. And as I pushed and was really upset with my son for breaking our mower, I wasn’t really walking according to the Spirit. Anyway, I looked down and I noticed something on this mower that my mower didn’t have. There was this extra lever.

And when I pushed that lever, all of a sudden, boom! It propelled itself. I had never seen a lawn mower like this. I had been pushing and mowing this yard by my own power, rather than accessing the power of the mower. So many of us, when we try to walk according to the Spirit, we’re trying to do it all by ourselves. We’re trying to overcome that anger, trying to overcome that lust, trying to overcome that selfish ambition, trying to overcome our selfishness, not realizing that God has given us this lever and it’s the power of his Spirit. And so here, Paul could be saying, “Hey, it’s in, it’s with,” but I think most importantly, it’s by the spirit. I love what the prophet Zechariah says. “It’s not by might, not by

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οὐ μὴ – ou mē

Never, certainly not, by no means

power, but by my Spirit' says the LORD." And so we want to make sure that we grab a hold of that lever.

Paul goes on to say, walk according to the Spirit or by the power of the Spirit. And if you do this, and surely you will, you will not ever, ever, ever fulfill the desires of the flesh, of the sinful nature. Some of you are like "Wait a second, you had an extra ever, ever, ever," where in the original language this is the strongest way to negate something. This is like Paul saying, "Never, it's not going to happen!" So Paul comes and says, "Hey, if you walk according to the Spirit, if you're in that lever, if you have the Spirit of God walking alongside of you, if you're in the sphere of the Spirit, then you're not going to fulfill the desires of the sinful nature. Who you used to be in that sphere, it's no longer you."

I love what Saint Augustine once said. If you know, Saint Augustine, before he became a believer, he was quite the ladies' man, and he had many different lovers and one that he lived with. But anyway, one time he was in this community, this neighborhood, after he'd become a believer and he didn't have social media, so he hadn't Tweeted out that he was a believer. One of his old lovers saw him from a distance and she began to cry out and get very excited about fulfilling their lust. She began to cry out because apparently she didn't think he noticed her. And she said, "Augustine! Augustine! It is I! It is I!" And Augustine turned around and looked and said, "Yes, but it is no longer I." The old is gone. That's not who I used to be, but now I have the Spirit of God that's inside of me.

The freedom that we have in Jesus Christ comes through the power of the Holy Spirit—us accessing that lever. And then once we access that lever, it's no longer we who are driving, but instead it's the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit of God that helps us produce the fruit of the Spirit. We'll continue this in the next session.