

Keep in Step with the Spirit

Scripture: Galatians 5:16-26
(07-19-26 Pastor Tony Hao)

Every person who follows God quickly discovers a frustrating reality: there is a civil war raging inside us. One moment we want to love, serve, and be generous. The next we are struck with anger, pride, or selfishness. Paul pulls back the curtain on this spiritual tug-of-war (5:16-18). He gives the roadmap for victory showing us the Christian life is not about trying harder under a set of rules, but about changing who is leading our steps.

When we live by the flesh, we are constantly working to defend our reputation, manage our image, protect our pride, and manipulate those around us. It is a toxic, exhausting way to live, and Paul warns us this relentless self-assertion is entirely incompatible with the Kingdom of God (5:19-21, 26). Instead, we start each day in humble dependence, asking: *"Holy Spirit, what is Your direction today? When I want to snap in anger, how can I yield to Your patience? When I want to gossip, how can I yield to Your kindness?"* (5:22-24)

Living out the Christian life is completely impossible if you are relying on your own willpower. If you try to force yourself to be patient or gentle on your own, you will eventually run out of gas, or you will become incredibly proud and conceited. The only way to march to the cadence of the Spirit is to keep your eyes fixed on the One who marched it perfectly first (5:25).

GROWING DEEPER (Reflection & Application)

1. What are some ways Christians sometimes "make provision for the flesh"?
2. How can a person overcome the flesh? Give an example from your life.
3. What does the Holy Spirit use to build us up in Christ? What is the cause of the conflict between the Spirit and the flesh?
4. Describe how the Spirit could most effectively grow fruit in your life. What will walking by the Spirit involve for you this week?