

The Spirit led Life

Galatians 5:13-18

A report by **George Barna Research Group** *that tracks church trends & monitors developments in the Christian world.* Said *ethics & morals among professing Christians are not significantly different from those who do not profess the Christian faith. 'While religion is highly popular in America, it is to a large extent superficial & does not change people's lives to the degree one would expect from the level of professed faith...*

Barnas' Christian focus group that was surveyed reminds me of the disciples Jesus rebuked in **Matt 17** saying to them '**O unbelieving and perverted generation**' because of their inability to cast out a demon when a father brought his son, who was **cruelly demon possessed** throwing the boy into fire & water & they seemed to be powerless to do anything.

Jesus continues to scold them '**How long shall I put up w/ you?**' From Jesus point of view they had been w/ Him long enough to have faith to cast the demon out. *Jesus would likely rebuke Barna's Christian focus group whose lives were unchanged.*

Later the disciples asked why couldn't we cast out the demon? He told them "**Because of the littleness of your faith**". And goes on to state that nothing shall be impossible to you if you have even the smallest amount of faith, even a mustard seed. **So** Barnas conclusion has nothing to do with the **legitimacy** of the Christian faith to change lives **but** it has **everything** to do w/ those in focus group & their little faith.

Paul stated in ch 4 two covenants-one by **bondwoman** bringing **slavery**, other **free woman** which brings **liberty**. One based on law other on grace. One of *the flesh* other of *the spirit*. One leaves followers empty & barren, other bears fruit of changed life.

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Paul makes the case: True Christianity, legitimate followers of Jesus, Genuine believers in Christ **do** have changed lives. Paul says the difference of changed or not changed is the difference between *walking in the spirit* or *waking in the flesh*.

To *walk in the Spirit is to walk in faith. Faith is observable by a changed life. Gal 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. (what counts is whether we really have been changed into new and different people TLB).*

Religious activity by rules, regulations, codes of conduct, do not noticeably change a person from what they were before—can even make worse. *Religion: mans attempt to get to God & never making it.*

True Christianity is God reaching down to us, initiating an ongoing relationship w/ Christ thru faith—His death, burial & resurrection

So walking in the flesh is our attempt to get to God by a set of religious rules. *It'll never happen!* It never has.

Always tension between the legalist, in the flesh & those free in the spirit. Can't stand that you not under law like they are—but they don't even keep it. KJ only cult Bumper sticker—*If it ain't KJ 1611 it ain't bible*—NASB most accurate word for word translation.

Matt 23:4 "And they tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger.

Gal 5:13,14 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." 15 But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another.

Key to life of freedom is serving others not giving into corrupt flesh. ***Greatest in K is servant of all Mk 9:35 I did not come to be served but to serve & give my life..Mk 10:45; Matt 10:28***

15 But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed by one another. – criticizing & attacking each other—hurting and harming—snarling and snapping

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The image is of wild dogs attacking, scavenger dogs ravaging a body, wounding and killing—a picture in spiritual realm of church where we don't love & serve one another but we criticize, condemn, complain.

Not everyone can handle freedom. Some are still children in their spiritual life--still need laws & rules to govern them or they'd do the wrong thing. *It's Sunday, your 40 years old and you're the pastor.*

Cure for dealing w/ flesh—*not turning freedom into opportunity for the flesh*--not a negative--Thou shalt not. But a positive you shall do—love & service *'thru love serve one another.'*

James 2:8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law, according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. Rom 13:10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.

Our calling as Christians is to freedom. This freedom is to do the right thing not *going hog wild* doing the wrong thing. If someone goes to jail serves their time & then is released into society. The hope & expectation is that they have learned their lesson & will do the right thing not go back to a life of crime. *For us not go back to sin-corrupt life*

The law imprisoned us—feeling of guilt & humiliation for sins committed, reflect on wrongs done, fear penalty, keeps us from further bad behavior, we crave freedom. Futility drive us to Christ. We go from imprisoned by law & now released to freedom in Christ—should make us want to stay there & not go back to the old life of flesh. *Illus like untrained puppy needs a leash or training wheels child learning to ride a bike. So law becomes the leash/training wheels to those who can't handle freedom. (child-tether) Law is like that, keeps us in check but once free not need lease or training wheels*

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Ps 32:9 Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, otherwise they will not come near to you. Intended to restrain unruly disposition of the animal.

Gal 5:16,17 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

Walk--manner of life--habitual behavior--mode of conduct, to follow as a companion. Jesus said *'I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of life.'*

Born again believers indwelt by Holy Spirit make choices pleasing to Lord. Yet we need fresh fillings, new empowerment daily—**leaky vessels Eph 5:18 'be being filled...'** As we walk in the spirit which is a continual action we grow & mature in **Christ-likeness**. **Ps 123 'as the eyes of the servants look....'**

Christian walk is warfare—flesh is set against spirit, spirit against flesh, they in opposition—**Flesh** is proud, **spirit** humble; **flesh** wants to be served, **spirit** serves, **flesh** is lust-full, **spirit** pure.

Saying I'm a Christian, I belong to Jesus is declaring God is more important to me than any other thing. **How I live my life tells who my God is.**

Walk in the spirit and you will not carry out/practice as a lifestyle, bring to fulfillment the desires of the flesh. The Spiritual is **greater** than the carnal.

This walking is a progression toward a goal--Is **stronger than** & **supercedes** walk in the flesh & carnal desires. **Samaritan woman at the well John 4:31-32 In the meanwhile the disciples were requesting Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." Ministry more important than food (air, thirst, food drives)**

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Hunger diminished by surfing—surfing diminished by ministry--work
forget about eating--child so much fun forgets...toilet

Inactive Christianity gives way to fleshly appetites. If there is no ongoing walk in the spirit, no progress in things of Lord, no feats of faith being accomplished, no moving forward in Christ, **carnal desires easily creep in & flesh wins out** because it opposes & is stronger than will power.

No decision to walk in the spirit is a decision for the flesh. There is no neutral ground. You can't coast in the spirit or stand in the spirit but need to walk, have spiritual momentum. *Illus-car uphill in neutral*

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

Sin starts in the mind & progresses into actions & ends in death Ja
1:14,15—tempted carried away

3 stages--moving from spiritual walk to walk of the flesh

1 Carried away, enticed by own lusts (sin nature) at that point **resist**, flee *'can't stop a bird from landing on your head but you can stop him from building his nest'* – if sin was like ice cream cone—first stage in eyeing it--looks good. 2 When lust is conceived gives birth to sin-to act upon, draw to self, embrace, at that point **repent** – you start licking the ice cream cone—acquiring a taste for and want more **'eyes w/ seeing are never satisfied'** 3 Sin accomplished brings death (live in) at that point need spiritual resurrection, complete renewal (like Lazarus dead raised kind of experience) Peter denied, wept, returned.