

# IMPACT

**I** **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday  
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own under-  
standing; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.  
Proverbs 3:5-6

**Passage:** Galatians 5:13-17 “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: ‘*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*’ But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another! I say then: **Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.** For *the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.*” 18 But if you are **led by the Spirit**, you are not under the law. 25 If we **live in the Spirit**, let us also **walk in the Spirit.**”

**Quote:** God and others, or myself are the choices I must make. In the battle with my flesh, joy and blessing are at stake. Love compels me to obey. Greed lures to a loathsome way. Through the Spirit, I can win o’er the flesh enticed to sin.

**L**ust means “strong desire.” It can be good or evil depending upon what we desire. Desires for even good things can be sinful if they are self-serving, harmful to others, or if they become an idol of the heart. An evil desire is a temptation to think, say, or do something that God forbids specifically or by general principle.<sup>1</sup> Because Adam willfully took for himself something that God had forbidden, his human nature became corrupt. He immediately knew the difference between good and evil. Good and evil came down to obedience or disobedience to the Word of God. Adam passed that corrupt, self-serving human nature on to his offspring.<sup>2</sup>

Every person’s inborn wickedness wants “forbidden fruit” that we know we cannot have without violating the laws of God. Paul wrote to believers, “For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our (bodies) to bear fruit to death.”<sup>3</sup> “In the flesh” refers to being unsaved and controlled by evil desires that war against God’s Word. Our hearts *naturally* have a greedy “serve-me” drive that often insists on being satisfied at any cost. The Holy Spirit within believers hinders us from satisfying those nagging, fleshly desires that offend God.

Likewise, the lingering influence of the flesh hinders us from following the Spirit’s promptings to do that which glorifies God. This constant war for our thoughts, words, and deeds can be won only as we obey the Word of God through the Holy Spirit’s enabling.

Paul states the same general principle of being guided by the Holy Spirit with four verbs. Christians are *to walk in the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit, to live in the Spirit, and to walk in the Spirit.* “Each of these verbs suggests a relationship of dynamic interaction, direction, and purpose.”<sup>4</sup> Paul bookends these four verbs with two different Greek words for “walk.” *To walk in the Spirit* means “to live, deport oneself, follow (as a companion or devoted admirer or devout worshipper).” The other word for “walk” means “to march in (military) rank (keep step), to conform to virtue and piety, or to walk (orderly).”<sup>5</sup> *In all of life, we are to display devotion to God, discipline of self and deferment to the welfare of*

## War Between the Flesh and the Spirit

*others.* Jesus taught this same vital life principle. “‘You shall love *the LORD* your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love *your neighbor* as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”<sup>6</sup>

This on-going battle between our flesh and God’s indwelling Holy Spirit involves choices. Paul often spoke of his own spiritual warfare. He wrote, “...Reckon yourselves to be *dead indeed to sin, but alive to God* in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.* And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”<sup>7</sup> When we fail in the battle with our flesh, we must choose to repent, “reload” through prayer and the Word, and fight on, grateful for God’s grace, and confident that the war has been won by the Captain of our Salvation!

<sup>1</sup> Example: 1 Thess.5:19-22 <sup>2</sup> Rom.5:12 <sup>3</sup> Rom.7:5 <sup>4</sup> N.A. Commentary <sup>5</sup> Strong’s Greek <sup>6</sup> Matt.22:37-40 <sup>7</sup> Rom.6:11-13; 1 Cor.10:12-13