



the Source

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...

While standing in the hall between classes with my colleague Beverly Thompson, we occasionally commiserated over the fact there would be no great literature in heaven. As we understood heaven there would be no struggle and struggle creates drama, a necessity for great literature. There would be no Scarlet Letter, no Outcasts of Poker Flat, no Great Gatsby, her favorite.

There is something amiss in our world that leads to conflict and struggle, and the Apostle Paul, whether as chief of Pharisees or as the apostle of Christ, was no stranger to struggle as either victim or perpetrator.

Whatever you might think about Paul, he truly understood the war that rages inside each of us. He knew there was nothing we could individually do about the wars and rumors of war raging around us. But, he knew there was a solution for the war raging within us, that personal struggle between doing what is wrong (though often convenient, easy and just plain fun), or doing what is right.

Are we going to let our lusts control us or are we going to let the Holy Spirit cultivate positive fruit?

This entire text is best illustrated by an old parable of two wolves: An old Cherokee is teaching his grandson about life. "A fight is going on inside me," he said to the boy. "It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil – he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego." He continued, "The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too." The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf will win?" The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed." —virtuesforlife.com

Joe Grove, First Church member

Consider the Source Galatians 5:16-26

A Family Affair

Throughout the past six weeks, children in Sunday School have been learning about the Fruit of the Spirit, found in Galatians 5:22-25. Read this passage with your family and discuss it together. From our Sunday School activities, children should be able to give good examples of the Fruit!

Living by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control can seem like a huge task, but God can help us. He sent his Holy Spirit to live in our hearts and guide us. When we are open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, we can more successfully show the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

Think of some ways that you show the Fruit of the Spirit. What words of kindness could you share with someone who is feeling down? How about letting someone go in front of you in the line at the ice cream shop? Is it always easy to make the right choice, like waiting patiently for our turn on the playground swing? With your family, discuss ideas to share the Fruit of the Spirit in your everyday life. When we share God's love with others and strive to live by the Fruit of the Spirit, we can grow closer in our relationship with God.

Pray together: Dear Lord, please help us make the choice to show others what God's love is all about. Help us to demonstrate the Fruit of the Spirit in our actions, words, and activities. Amen.

— Tammy Parks, Elementary Coordinator

Monday: Galatians 5:16,17

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. Paul says walk by the Spirit.

- How do you apply this admonishment?
- How do you know if you are or are not doing so?

Tuesday: Galatians 5:18

But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law. Paul's reference here is to the Old Testament law.

- How might this also apply to the laws of the state of Texas?
- If you understand and abide by the spirit of the law, do you really need the letter of the law? For whom is law necessary?

Wednesday: Galatians 5:19-21

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

- Wow! This is quite a list. In many twelve step programs, one step is to make "a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." Use this list to do just that.
- What would you add to this list?
- Having made such a list, what would be the wise thing to do with it?

Thursday: Galatians 5:22, 23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

- I like this list much better. Even as you did an inventory of the list of negatives, do an inventory of this list also. On this list feel free to let family and friends help you.

Friday: Galatians 5:24-26

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

- What do you think Paul meant by crucify the flesh?
- How exactly is this done?
- How does one keep in step with the Spirit?
- Both crucify and keep in step are actions. What actions can we take to accomplish these two things?

