

“The Normal Christian Life – HOW Then Should We Live, Part 6?”

Review:

- **Only the Fruit of the Spirit Can Satisfy the Law’s Demand**
- **The Dynamic of the Normal Christian Life Is Far Above the Law**
- **Carnality Is A Red Flag On Our Lives As Believers**
- **The Fruit of the Spirit Reveals God’s Work Within Us**
- **The Walk of the Believer Under Grace Is Moment By Moment**

- **Only the Fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, ...) Can Satisfy the Law’s Demand**

- In our last study here in God’s word we saw that there is a looming question: What is it that the law demands? What can “fulfill it” or “complete it”, or satisfy its demands? Many are quick to answer, “simply our obedience, of course, or at least our willingness to obey”. And they would add, but, when we fail, God will forgive us, if, if, if ... We just need to try harder, next time. Although this may sound right on its surface, it is lacking fundamental truth, at least as generally understood.

For law itself usually has many dimensions (surely true in the case of the Law of Moses, but also in most every other law), and all must be fulfilled for the many demands of the law to be satisfied.

But what have we learned from Paul regarding this?

Galatians 5:14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. [*Quoted from Leviticus 19:18*]

- This is Paul’s way of saying that we should not be so focused as many are on satisfying all of the dictates and requirements of the Law. Why not? Because, as he writes in verse 14, “all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” quoting from Moses.

But for us, since the Lord God has provided every believer under the Dispensation of the Grace of God with the Holy Spirit to dwell within us, he is able to miraculously deliver us from the bondage to the flesh. Praise God. Verses 16-18 of chapter 5 describe that working:

- ***The Dynamic of the Normal Christian Life Is Far Above the Law***

Galatians 5:16-18

16 *This* I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. [*namely, the works of the flesh!*]

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

- Praise God we have been set free! Amen. These are the key verses in the Pauline revelation regarding the dynamic behind the liberty we have in Christ Jesus, a liberty enabling us in our living to rise above even the most compelling demands of our fleshly natures.

- ***But Carnality, Sadly, Is A Red Flag On Our Lives As Believers***

- Now Paul makes a long list, one of several in his letters, as we have already seen, Galatians 5:19-21. We will not read it again now. We know the list well, I am sure.
- The red flag, “Beware. Don’t go here!”, is his meaning, knowing full well that all know at least some of these through direct experience!! That is what is signified by these signpost words found here in verses 19-21. Last time, we showed how there are four sub-listings here: first, sexual sin, then religious error, followed by broken relationships, and then finally, substance abuse.
- He says it this way, for if we are not aware of the threat, we shall surely be overcome. One needs to prepare for this race, a lifelong one, or we shall be disgraced surely, and we will be captured much as the unsaved, who can never escape this bondage.

The flesh is considered first here since the dynamic of walking by the Spirit can never produce such works as these. Their presence is a sure indicator, therefore, like a big red flag, the sure sign of our failure to live out the normal Christian life as we should.

- Verse 19: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest ...” This means they are so easily seen and known (and, as well, he implies that they are so common in all of us sinners, though we are saved by grace eternally). So they are visible within us all and not hidden from us, though we often so easily might think that they are or hope that they are.
- We do need to dwell on the list to recognize our condition properly, and that is why our apostle is so direct and concrete, and inclusive here in his wording. And even at that, his list is not complete, nor can it be. For we

may have thought we were spiritual when in fact we were carnal and under the control of the nature of sin that still dwells within every one of us.

- For some of these works are subtle, and some of them may even be religious in their essence, like witchcraft or idolatry. But we can, I hope, discern them in us as needed.

What should our response be when a red flag appears? “Mortify”, Col. 3:5, “put off”, verse 9, and as 1 Cor. 10:14 indicates, we should “flee” from it.

Colossians 3:5 Mortify [*or render dead, or, put to death*] therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

- So it is, he writes, just that simple. Walk in or by the Spirit! If we are living in the realm of the Spirit’s working, we shall not find these works being produced in and through us. But if we do find them within, there is a ready solution. Remember the Romans, chapter six teaching where it is put differently, using the verb “present” in a negative way and then in a positive way, you will recall:

Romans 6:11-14

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

- Reckoning is the way back, as written here, because as verses 14 & 15 show, we are under grace and not law as reflected in that grand teaching of verses 11 & 15. What a difference this liberty in Christ Jesus has made for us who were otherwise, sinners of the Gentiles, living with only the coming judgment awaiting us, just as all of them are.
- ***The Fruit of the Spirit Reveals God’s Work Within Us***

Galatians 5:22-24

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

- So the fruit of the Spirit is always our experience, WHEN AND ONLY WHEN we are walking in league with and in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, as he exalts our Lord Jesus Christ, in his completed work. presently seated at the right hand of our Father in heavenly glory. Now, having conquered sin and death, he dwells in the spirit within each of us, sharing his victory.

- ***The Walk of the Believer Under Grace Is Moment By Moment***

- Wrapping up his teaching, he writes only a few more words, but they are important words indeed: Since we have crucified the flesh (how can this be, except through identification), it still operates within us. We are alive in Christ, so let us now truly live as God intends, authentically demonstrating step by step the normal Christian Life to its fullness (my paraphrase):

Galatians 5:25-26

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

- Stoicheo vs peripateo:
 - περιπατέω (peripatéō | per-ee-pat-eh'-o)
KJV: —go, be occupied with, walk (about).
 - στοιχέω (stoichéō | stoy-kheh'-o)
KJV: —walk (orderly).
- So the first is high level, overall, walking about, the way of one's life, while the other is step-by-step, detailed, specific.
- **NOW THE SUBJECT CHANGES TO WORKS OF A DIFFERENT KIND, TO GOOD WORKS...**

Paul's Concluding Words to the Galatians:

Galatians 6:9-10

9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

- This wording is very interesting as the good works are kind of “added on”, and the wording “especially unto them who are of the household of faith” says we should set priorities! Doing good is easily misinterpreted, and this admonition is easily misapplied (witness in our modern day in the churches).

These works are not to be our central focus, however, in our living out of the Normal Christian Life. For many believers, though, this is the dominating focus of their lives. For that would be literally putting the cart before the horse, as it were. Our priorities ought to be otherwise.

The concluding verses in the chapter should enable us all to set our priorities correctly:

Galatians 6:14-18

14 But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

- Verses 14-18 are a powerful ending indeed ; what more can be added? That says it all. The entire letter was written to put “works” in their proper place. So when he adds here in verse 10, “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*”, he is saying enough.

For our walking in the Spirit leads naturally to fruitful works, or, to use the alternate language, “good works”. But, one may rightfully ask, what about the “good works” of unbelievers? Do they not count in the eyes of Almighty God in some measure? I will leave that question for another time. But for your study, you might well go to Revelation 20:11-15, where we find the answer to that question.

Today’s Outline: In Christ Jesus, We Are All Created Unto Good Works

- ***Good Works in the Lives of Us Saints in General***

Next Time: In Christ Jesus, We Are All Created Unto Good Works, Part 2

- ***Good Works in the Lives of Elders (Overseers)***
- ***Good Works in the Lives of Believing Women***

- ***Good Works in the Lives of Believing Men (Wealthy)***
- ***Good Works in the Lives of Paul's Co-Ministers (Timothy)***
- ***Good Works in the Lives of All (and Titus)***

I. Good Works in the Lives of Us Saints in General

- So what is the Pauline perspective on good works in the lives of us saints? Should we be focused on them or not?

In Ephesians, that foundational prison letter, Paul writes these memorable words:

[READ] Ephesians 2:8-10

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

- This puts our works in proper perspective, doesn't it? They do not count at all as far as our salvation is concerned. For it is a pure gift of God according to his marvelous and full grace. "Not of works, lest any should boast." Here, our apostle focuses on the Lord's work "in us". And, as he writes here, the Lord has "created us in Christ Jesus unto good works". Great language indeed.

So we "... were created in Christ Jesus, as out of nothing!" Only God can do this, not the enemy, and not ourselves. What we can do (or the enemy), is simply not the same. For we can never reform the old nature.

He continues with these words: "unto good works which were ordained or set before us believers so that we might walk in them, or walk in the realm of them", to paraphrase a little (not much though): For the fruit of the Spirit naturally is manifested in that way when works are brought forth with the empowering of Almighty God. It is as if God created the "molds" already, and what fills them to overflowing is our spiritual fruit. Our "walking in them" then is how he describes that result, that manifestation, of the work of God in us. That is how the desires of the new nature within us, due to God's creative work, are naturally manifested. This is how the Normal Christian Life is completed. Amen.

- Or, in the letter to his associate in ministry, Titus, he writes similarly:

[READ] Titus 2:11-15

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men [*all of humanity*],

12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;
13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;
14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.
15 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man [*one, or nobody*] despise thee.

- And then in chapter 3 of Titus, again, with powerful and transforming words indeed:

[READ] Titus 3:1-9, 14-15

1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,
2 To speak evil of no man [*no one*], to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.
3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another.
4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man [*mankind*] appeared,
5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;
6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;
7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
8 *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.*
9 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

...

10 A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;
11 Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.
12 When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter.
13 Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

...

14 And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.
15 All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen. [*See also 1 Timothy 2:1-7.*]

- So, as in Ephesians, in the letter to Titus, immediately after bold statements regarding our salvation by grace through faith, he adds the “good works”. So it is something in his mind that he needed to add. It is like the glorious story has already been told, and the storytelling is done. But one thing still needs to be added at the end.

And it should be added in our walk of faith as well, but only after what is realized in our hearts and minds, as written just before those words.

For good works otherwise are not truly and authentically good at all. They become “Wood, hay, and stubble”, so very easily when they are not built up on the proper foundation. For they often become a part of a religious system that we have entered into or have created for ourselves.

- As a prime example, witness the World Vision “Mission” work, helping so many worldwide with a multi-billion dollar budget, but without the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus being shared.

Conclusions and Application:

- As I said last time, our lesson then WAS NOT about Paul telling us what we have to do to please God, for that would be to place us under another law. This, rather, is a gracious exhortation.

RATHER, this is all about what we are privileged to enjoy, as we walk by his grace empowering in newness of life and under the always-present shadow of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.

- And the same is true as we have seen today in our study on good works. We are not under a law of good works today either.
- Praise God for his infinite grace through our wonderful, risen savior. He is risen indeed, and has broken the bonds of sin and death, and delivered us into a liberty of such power to lift us moment by moment out of this world and into the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. That is how our Lord God sees us, and that is how we must see ourselves as well, if we are to enjoy to the fullest the unsearchable riches of his grace.

We are to abound in fruitfulness AND good works. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, our works will be tested, whether they are truly good or not. And those not well be removed and the others remain, for our own and Christ’s eternal glory.

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it* be good or bad.

- Amen and amen.