

Soul Care: The Soul Needs Intimacy with God – Gal 5:13-26

Pentecost Sun

Small Group Notes

Galatians 5:13-26 - You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. ¹⁴The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbour as yourself." ¹⁵If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

¹⁶So I say, **live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.** ¹⁷For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. ¹⁸But **if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.**

¹⁹The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹and 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.

²²But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. ²⁵**Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.** ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

The best way to live life is close to God.

Look at Psalm 84.

- What phrases or ideas do you like that connect with David's desire to be near God?
- Have you ever felt close to God in a way that made everywhere else less desirable? What happened? What was it like?

The best place to be... is in the middle of God's will... to see Him at work around us or through us.

- What examples in scripture can you think of when people were swept along by the Holy Spirit at work?

So the **best** place to be is near God, and in the middle of his will.

The problem is... we don't tend to stay there. **So why not?**

Read Galatians 5:17

The soul needs **intimacy** with God. The soul is also tainted, confused, and complicated.

Read James 4:4-10.

- How do these verses illustrate the battle that goes on within us?

James 4:4-10 - **You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred towards God?** Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do

you think Scripture says without reason that **the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely?** ⁶ But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." ⁷ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ **Come near to God and he will come near to you.** Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

- Why do you think Christians sometimes downplay this battle?

An example from Sunday was with the song "Come Thou Fount" by Robert Robinson.

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing, Tune my heart to sing Thy grace...

Last verse... *Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love;*

After this song was written, someone thought they would take the edge off... so in some hymnbooks you'll find these words: *Prone to worship, Lord, I feel it, Prone to love the God I serve.*

So what is the way forward?

Read Galatians 5:16 - So I say, *live* by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Read Galatians 5:18 - But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

If you could live by the Spirit... completely, totally... you would live the perfect and effective Christian life.

We apply our will to living a godly life, and then find that we fail. A more effective path is to apply your will to living by the Spirit.

Read Galatians 5:25 - Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

- So how do we walk in the Spirit, or put another way, how do we keep in step with the Spirit?

A note of caution... **The Holy Spirit will not contradict anything in God's word.** Sometimes we need to test things... checking it against what we know God has said is a good start.

Become aware of the Holy Spirit within you

When you become a Christian, the Holy Spirit comes to live within. This presence should not be confused with the greater potential of being filled with the Spirit or walking in the Spirit... but is a constant reality.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:16

You are the temple where God dwells!

- How can we become more aware of the Holy Spirit within us?

Learn to spend time with God and take God with you...

Read Rev 3:20- written to Christians- "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me."... We are invited to eat with Jesus.

Some of us need some discontent in regard how close we are to God.

Theologia Germanica- "If you can come to the point where you are to God what your hand is to you, be content."

This Sunday we will look at 'The Soul Needs Rest'.

- How have you discovered the value of time with God whether daily, weekly, or seasonal?
- If things like spiritual retreat, spiritual reading, prayer, and worship nourish the soul why don't we do them more often?

Learn to be obedient to the Holy Spirit

Read John 3:8 - The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

Illustration by R.T. Kendall - dove story - (This metaphor really falls apart if you push it too far!)

There was an American couple in Israel as missionaries named Sandy and Bernice. A dove came to their window and they considered it to be a confirmation from the Lord that they were in the right place. They found, however, that every time a door slammed shut or if they raised their voices the dove would fly off and they didn't know if it would return. They worried that it may never return. Eventually they talked and said, "either the dove will adjust his behaviour to us or, if we really want to make sure we never lose him, we will have to adjust our behaviour to the dove." R. T. Kendall writes, "Watching that dove was a daily reminder to that precious couple. It changed their lives for ever."

Galatians 5:25 - Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

- How do we develop an attitude of obedience to whatever the Spirit might call us to do?

Learn to depend on the Holy Spirit

Need you to get out of your depth, and find God's Spirit is there to help you.

- Can you think of examples in scripture when people were 'out of their depth' and God used them?
- Why is it helpful to discipleship to be in a situation where we need God's help?