

Watch Your Walk!

GALATIANS 5:16-26*

AFTER MAKING HIS point that freedom is not an excuse for indulging the flesh, Paul clarifies what he means by a life of freedom. Such a life, he says, is living in the Spirit. But this life is a war, a war between the Spirit and the flesh. But this war is not some “personal psychological struggle” or the “struggle within a person’s soul.” Rather, as E. P. Sanders has said, “The war ... has to do with which power one—body and soul—belongs to.”¹⁴ The powers are “flesh” and “Spirit.”¹

The constant conflict within us (16-18)

The characteristics of our flesh (19-21)

The Comforter produces freedom (22-25)

Characteristics of the flesh (sin-nature) (19-21a).

Sensual sins (19, 21b)	Spiritual sins (20a)	Social sins (20b-21a)	
#1. immorality	#4. idolatry	#6. enmities	#11. dissensions
#2. impurity	#5. sorcery	#7. strife	#12. factions
#3. sensuality		#8. jealousy	#13. envying
#14. drunkenness		#9. outbursts of anger	
#15. carousing		#10. dispute	
#16. and things such as these			

Characteristics of the Spirit (22-23a).

<i>agape</i> love		
God centered (22a)	Others centered (22b)	Self centered (22c-23a)
#1. love	#4. patience	#7. faithfulness
#2. joy	#5. kindness	#8. gentleness
#3. peace	#6. goodness	#9. self-control

HOW CAN WE CONDEMN THE GALATIANS for being unwilling to live according to Paul’s view of ethics if we have the identical problem? How can we accuse the Galatians of being gullible and of embracing what was clearly an inferior system when we are unable and unwilling to live with the open-endedness of the Pauline view of Christian freedom? Are we perhaps as guilty of “legalism” as they were? Do we perhaps also want legal guidelines and Mosaic law? These questions are worth pondering.²

* These notes are prayerfully provided to aid, not replace, your personal study of God’s Word.

¹⁴ E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 553–54.

¹ Scot McKnight, *Galatians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 268–269.

² Ibid 272–273.