

The Holy Spirit: THE Key to Living a Faithful Christian Life (Part 3)

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- [0 : 00] or Christian friends to you. I want you to carefully consider Christian friends. Most of us in this room, we have a lot of friends and acquaintances from all walks of life.
- I'm not talking about just friends in general. How important, how valuable are your Christian friends to you? Think of it this way.
- What kind of impact do they have on your life? What kind of influence? How do they help you live out your faith as a Christian? Or do they?
- Think about it this way. What kind of influence, what kind of impact do you have on the Christian life of your Christian friends?
- How are you helping them to grow spiritually? Well, how does it happen? How is it that Christian brothers and sisters can really positively impact each other's lives?
- [1 : 13] What would it look like? Well, turn to Galatians chapter 5, and we're going to look at what Paul says about how we as believers should and should not be treating one another.
- How we should be helping one another, not causing problems for one another. Galatians chapter 5 is where we've been for the last two weeks.
- We've been looking at the big picture, how the Holy Spirit, and I want you to look at that title, how the Holy Spirit is the, strongly emphasizing the key to living a faithful Christian life.
- There's a lot of things involved. We want to really know the Lord, become more like Him, make a difference in people's lives. There's a lot of things involved.
- You've got to be a person who knows what God thinks by reading His Word, knowing how He wants us to live. You've got to spend some time with Him in prayer.
- [2 : 22] But no matter what we do, as Christians, we must have the indwelling power of the Spirit of God to make it all sort of come together.
- He is the key, most important key, if we're serious about living a faithful Christian life. Now, two weeks ago, we looked at what Paul said in verses 16 through 17, 16, 17, and 18 of Galatians 5, he talked about how we've got to depend on the Holy Spirit's power.
- The Christian faith is a supernatural faith. When God does something in us, it is something supernatural where He changes us from the inside out.
- He causes us to think differently, want to live differently. He regenerates us, gives us a whole new perspective. He puts His Spirit in us.
- And so if we are going to be different from people who are not Christians, if we are going to develop real Christian character, we've got to depend on the Holy Spirit's power to enable us.
- [3 : 32] Last week, we saw that we must make the Holy Spirit the dominant source of influence in our lives. A lot of things influence us. People influence us.

The world, the culture today influences us. We have our own sinful desires, our old habits. We've got to make sure that it's the Spirit within us that is the dominant force in our lives.

That's the only way that we're going to be able to be loving and peaceful and demonstrate kindness when it's not easy. As Paul talks about the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5, verses 22 and 23.

Well, today we're going to look at how the Spirit of God uses us to make a positive difference in people's lives. We're going to summarize it like this. Demonstrate the Holy Spirit's fruit in all your relationships.

That's what this passage, beginning in chapter 5, verse 26, through chapter 6, really verse 10, is telling us.

[4 : 43] We are called by God. God expects us in our relationships with one another, brothers and sisters in Christ. He expects us to demonstrate that love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and so on.

Let's start reading it. Galatians chapter 5. Let's read verse 25. That's where a new paragraph starts. If you've got a Bible translation that has paragraphs, most likely the new paragraph begins in verse 25.

He says, If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Brothers. And that could be translated brothers and sisters. If anyone is caught in any transgression or sin, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.

Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. We're going to stop there because we're going to look at this part about our relationships with one another over a period of about three different messages.

[5 : 53] The way we are instructed to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit in all of our relationships involves both what we would call negatives and positives. Let's look at the negative first.

How we should not treat one another. Verse 26. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Paul is beginning this by talking about their spiritual pride among you. Their spiritual pride in the church. It seems that those who consider themselves to be, to living Spirit-led lives, they've become conceited.

They thought they were spiritually superior to most other Christians. Whenever I hear that word conceited, I think about two guys that I went to high school with that are one year ahead of me.

They were best friends. I want you to understand that at first. They were best friends. One of them, he was just arrogant because he thought he was a superstar athlete.

[7 : 05] He was a good athlete. But his best friend, if he told him once, he told him a dozen times that I heard it, his friend would say, he's not conceited, he's convinced.

That's what a conceited person is, isn't it? Prideful, arrogant. They're convinced about themselves that. Paul is telling us that there's people in the church there's Christians who are convinced that they are more spiritually minded than everybody else in the church.

Maybe they know more, maybe they know more about the Bible. Maybe they've memorized more verses. Maybe they are more gifted. The fact is, everybody's gifted differently, some more so than others.

Maybe they were prideful because they were involved. I've known people who took pride just because they were here Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night as if that made them some kind of spiritual giant. You can be a doorstop and be here Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night.

Makes no difference. But they, hey, the people I'm talking about, they were prideful. They let you know they were here Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night. So, I want you to think about it.

[8 : 27] Let me, let me mention something here. We talk about Christian friends, Christians in the church. Most of the New Testament letters were written to a church in a city.

Galatia, Galatians, that letter, it was written to a group of churches in a region called Galatia. Here's what I want you to know. When Paul wrote to the Galatians, those people in the church, they were all the Christians they knew.

When Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus, the letter to the Ephesians, most likely, the only Christians those people knew were those who were part of this Ephesian church.

We're not like that. You may have more friends who are committed Christians outside this church than you have inside. Some of you may, you have good Christian friends here, but your life revolves in another place, really.

Maybe you've got some good Christian friends you work with. Maybe there's a group at school that you know. They care about their relationship with the Lord, and so you hang out with them. They're your, they're sort of like your church family.

[9 : 39] They're your Christian brothers and sisters that you have a closer relationship with. So as we go through this message, I'm going to apply it a lot to this church, but I want you to understand it applies to you and your relationships with other Christians in other places.

So, Paul's telling us there's people, Christians, spiritually minded Christians, who've maybe let their spiritual maturity go to their head, and they're very prideful.

They're condescending towards some others. You know, such attitudes are usually spotted quickly. You pretty well can see it pretty early, and it causes problems, doesn't it?

It causes problems at work. It causes problems among your friends when one person's sort of looking down at everybody else. It causes problems in the church. An arrogant person, condescending person, they, they provoke people.

They stir up trouble. They stir up a lot of negative attitudes, including envy. Paul singles that out here.

[10 : 48] I want you to picture the problem in this church. You've got a small group of members who are probably more spiritually minded, truly, and they use their gifts and talents in the ministry. They're involved.

They're, they're, they're up front. They're doing things. People see them, but they think they're spiritually superior. And because of that, they're really not all that spiritual. They're displeasing to God.

Pride's one of the most serious sins. It can ruin our lives. It can ruin a lot of relationships. But you've got another group, they not only resent these arrogant spiritual people, they're envious.

They envy the gifts and talents of those who are up front and serving. These people feel spiritually inferior.

And the other ones, these arrogant ones, they feel spiritually superior. Now let's apply that. We, we need to guard against both an attitude of inferiority and superiority.

[12 : 00] No one is superior to anyone in this church or anywhere else. I want you to understand that. There's no pecking order in the family of God.

We are all in this room sinners that if we're Christians, we're saved by the grace of God and the grace of God's unearned. I want you to understand something. Not many people, this may not apply to, but God is not impressed with you.

God's not impressed with me. You see, God's standard is perfection. And we're far from that.

God stooped down. I better not do that again. I won't get back up. My knees aren't like they used to be. God really bent way over to make us His child.

And He didn't have to do that. God chose to be gracious and merciful and not give us what we deserve, but give us the gift of salvation through the work of His Son, the death of His Son on the cross, that we just received by faith, the gift of salvation.

[13 : 22] We have nothing to feel superior about. Whatever gifts we have, they've been given to us by God.

Some of you in this room, you have some real gifts and talents that you use for God in some visible ways, some things behind the scene, maybe not even in this church, but in other realms of life.

You use what God's given you and it's significant. But He gave you those gifts for you to serve Him and serve other people, not to make you feel superior.

So in light of what Paul is saying here, the best thing for you to do this morning is to forget about yourself. Don't seek to be honored. To be thanked.

Don't even seek to be noticed. Just think instead that you have the privilege, by the grace of God, you have the privilege to use what God's given you in a way that does help other people, that does help serve God's purpose in this world.

[14 : 37] number two, that not only is no one superior, no one is inferior. No one is inferior to anyone in this church or anywhere else.

We're all made in the image of God. There's people, everywhere you go, there's people who battle this thing about self-image. I want you to know, as a human being, even if you're not a Christian, as a human being, you were created in the image of God and that gives you automatically worth and value.

We should treat all human beings, no matter what their walk of life, with worth, with value, with a sense of dignity because they are created in the image of God.

And if you're a Christian, you need to think a little bit more. Jesus Christ died for me, gave up His life, suffered for me, for my sins, so that I could be forgiven and not suffer.

That does make you worth something, doesn't it? Worth a lot. Now, if someone is more gifted or talented than you are, and somebody is, always, that's not their fault.

[15 : 59] Don't be mad at somebody because they're smarter than you, they're sharper than you, they can do certain things that you can't do. If you've come on Sunday nights some, you spiritually minded people who come on Sunday nights, you know that a lot of times we have done some video studies with Matt Chandler.

He's one of my favorite preachers. And I know he's better than me. I mean, he just communicates, I can sit and listen to him for an hour.

I couldn't listen to me for an hour. Some of you have made it plain, you won't listen to me for an hour. So, I get that. But I really like Chandler.

And I'm thankful that God gave him those gifts, he's helped me in some ways, taught me some things, I've learned some things from him. I can honestly say I'm not jealous of him.

I'm thankful for him. And I recognize that he's more gifted than me. We need to learn to do that. Learn to do that in whatever realm of life you're operating in, that there are people better than you, so what?

[17 : 10] If they're just more naturally gifted, or they've just got that drive that makes them better, your problem is not with them, your problem's really with God because he made them that way.

Why be jealous of somebody who is quicker than you, faster than you, in whatever sports you play? God made them that way. So, accept that.

But instead of being jealous, just appreciate it. And in the church, if there's somebody who's serving more than you, they're just more faithful than you, they're more gifted than you are, or they're having a greater impact than you are, instead of being jealous, why don't you just try to follow their example, maybe?

Learn from them, maybe. Serve like they do. Be involved like they are. What I want us to see, what Paul wants us to see here, there is no place for an attitude of superiority or inferiority among Christians in any setting, in any setting, and that is especially true in the church.

But if we are either, looking down or looking up, feeling inferior, feeling superior, either way, if that's true about us right now, that means we're not living in the power of the Holy Spirit, we're giving in to the temptation.

[18 : 44] We're giving in to the temptation to let how someone else is affect how we are and how we actually function in the church or even among our friends.

That's the negative, how we should not treat one another. Let's move on. He tells us how we should treat one another. The first thing he tells us is in verse 1, and this is very hard.

We're just going to look at verse 1 this morning. I want you to think about it as we go through this. What we're going to look at is something God expects you and me to do in each other's life when necessary.

We hope it's never necessary, but it may be necessary for you to do something in a person's life, in my life. Look at what he says, verse 1.

Brothers, brothers and sisters, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself lest you too be tempted.

[19 : 48] Paul's telling us here we need to learn to confront sin in one another's lives. Now he's not telling us to pronounce judgment on somebody and just write them off.

He's not telling us to have this judgmental spirit and just looking for faults and trying to condemn people. He's talking about confronting someone that we know, that we care about, that we see something happening in their life and we want to help them and not let it hurt them.

Let's look at it. The time to confront. If anyone is caught in any transgression. The NIV says if anyone is caught in a sin. The idea here now is that, let's just say, let's just talk about the church.

But it applies to you and your friends at work. It applies to you and your friends at church, at school. Let's just say you've got a friend. We're not talking about nitpicking someone, looking for trouble.

We're not talking about getting our spiritual microscopes out and trying to find flaws in people. That's not what he's talking about. Here's what he's talking about, something serious.

[21 : 00] Maybe you notice your friend. It seems, it seems inappropriate the attention they're giving to someone of the opposite sex and it's not their spouse.

Or maybe it's one of your friends you go to school with and you know they're too involved with the person they're dating. Maybe it's someone you work with and you've, you have found something that gives you the idea you're almost, you're 99% sure they're embezzling from the company.

We're talking about something serious that is sinful. Something that would not please God if he sees it in one of his children. we're supposed to confront them.

Now how do we do it? Well, we don't ignore it. How do we respond to these situations? We don't ignore it. That's the natural thing to do. You just don't, you shake your head.

Don't, just ignore it. I didn't see that. Stick your head in the sand. We do that sometimes. We, we should not respond by exposing it to other people and gossiping.

[22 : 13] You don't go to somebody else and say, you know what I'm thinking? You know what I've seen? That's not what he's saying. And right here, he is not talking about passing on what we know to somebody else like in the church.

He's not saying go and tell the pastor or another church leader. No. There may be a time and place for that but initially, if there's a Christian friend, you see something going on in their life that it needs to be dealt with and they need to be confronted and the Lord lays it on your heart and you see it and you know it, you've got to do that.

That's a part of living a spirit-filled life, bearing one another's burdens that when someone is caught in a sin and we're talking about privately, everybody doesn't know this yet according to what we're reading here.

We'll go to them privately with the prayer that God will help us help them to turn around, to stop it and hopefully never even be publicly exposed.

Now there are exceptions to be made for crimes. Child abuse, nothing private.

[23 : 33] child abuse, we call the police or the sheriff's department. Child abuse, I want to know it. It will not be ignored, it will not be swept under the carpet.

Spousal abuse, the church for too long has tried to just close their eyes, hope things go away, stick their head in the sand.

That should not be. So we're not talking about covering up crimes. We're not talking about failing to do what we're supposed to do.

We're not talking about protecting children or other vulnerable people. We're talking about friends who are doing something and no one else knows it but you find out about it, you can intervene.

Number two, look at the person who confronts. He says, you who are spiritual. The spiritual would be those people who are seeking to obey the Holy Spirit's leadership.

[24 : 35] They're people who are growing in their faith. They demonstrate Christian character. They're not perfect. No one is perfect but some people are more spiritually minded than others. Some are more mature than others. This is the kind of person who could deal with such an issue in love and try to help the person, not hurt them.

Don't ever get involved in trying to deal with someone else's sin. If you don't have that spirit-given maturity and wisdom and you can do it in love.

Number three, the way to confront is in a spirit of gentleness. Gentleness is part of the fruit of the spirit. That's why Paul says only the spiritual can do this. Now, such gentleness does not mean leniency.

intimacy. We're not talking about overlooking a problem. Sometimes love's got to be tough. You know that. Sometimes love has got to be tough in families and among friends.

The idea here is that the work of restoration should be done with sensitivity, care, concern for the other person. Number four, the goal of confrontation is to restore.

[25 : 46] You're not trying to punish. The sin you have seen in this person's life has alienated them from God. Their relationship with Him is strained.

And so you're wanting to bring them back to a right relationship with Him. You're wanting to help them to be restored to where they need to be in their walk with the Lord. So the purpose of such confrontation, the purpose of church discipline is always to help never to hurt.

It's always redemptive, not punitive. Number five, the caution about confrontation. If you don't hear anything else, you listen to this. He says, keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

There's no place in the whole kingdom of God for this spiritual pride where you think of yourself as something, you're above sin, you're above what somebody else can do, and you just look condescendingly down at them, and you're going to correct them because you're so much better than them.

None of us are immune from any kind of temptation. None of us are above any sin. Some people in churches today, and we're a church today, some people need to really let that sink in.

[26 : 57] If you don't see in your own life a personal battle with sin, that means you have a very poor understanding of what sin is and how holy God is.

If you have any understanding at all of how holy and pure God is, and how repulsed he is by sin, you'll know I am a sinner.

I'm not above anybody. I could fall in a lot of different kinds of ways. No matter what you see in another person's life, you could, under certain circumstances, you could fall in a very equally bad way.

You may not be as susceptible to the same sins as somebody you know, but there are other ways the devil tempts us and traps us if we're not on guard and seeking to be faithful.

We need to always guard against pride and self-righteousness, and that is always present in many churches. Some Christians, I don't understand it, just have this smug attitude as if they are above other Christians.

[28 : 23] Confronting someone in their sin is a very uncomfortable thing to do, but it's an important thing if you really love your brother or sister.

sometimes it's just, you just got to be uncomfortable because you love them enough. You're going to say something, you're going to step up before they ruin their family, before they lose their job, before they ruin their reputation, before they ruin their life.

It's also important for us to realize somebody may need to talk to me someday. if somebody comes to you that you know is a godly person, you know that they're saying it because they just have to, they don't want to, and you know they're coming to you because they love you, swallow your pride and listen.

It may be that it's not true, but listen to them, find out why they're coming to you. Something has caused that. We all need to be open to such confrontations because that's how the Lord may intervene to help us or save us in some way.

Are you demonstrating the Holy Spirit's fruit in your relationships with other people? Let me ask you this, are you involved in meeting relationships with other Christians?

[29 : 59] Christians? Do you have, I mean, real, close relationships with other Christians in this church?

Maybe in other settings. Maybe your life is mostly at work, at school, and you're just here on Sundays. You don't really have the opportunity to know that many people here. Are you involved with other Christians in a meaningful way, have meaningful relationships?

relationships. You need, I need, every Christian needs the blessings that come from other Christians who demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit toward us.

Your friends need it from you. Not just your friends in general, but your Christian friends need it. Will you be this kind of friend?

It may be that you need to be more intentional about developing better, deeper, more meaningful friendships with other Christians.

[31 : 00] You may need some help in doing that. You may need to think, I've got good Christian friends, but we only talk about sports. We only talk about the weather.

We only talk about our families. families. Why don't you work on developing a relationship with them in which you can talk about spiritual things? Maybe if they're a member of this church, talk about this sermon.

There's you in opening. Talk about how God is working in your life. If you're a really good friend and you trust Him, talk about how you need God's help in certain areas of your life.

Talk about some of your struggles, some of your weaknesses. And if anybody ever does confide in you that way, that means you've got to keep it confidential. You don't tell your spouse, you don't tell anybody, you just don't mention it.

It may be that you ask somebody to pray for you. That's an opening. Maybe you even get together and pray together. God works through His Spirit and His people to develop us into the people He wants us to be.

[32 : 12] I want to encourage you, make sure you are in the position to grow, to develop more Christ-like character by living in obedience to the Spirit of God who indwells you and by living in closer fellowship with other Christians that God's put in your life to also help you.

let's pray together. Dear God, help us to think about what you have said here in this passage about how we should and should not live in relationship with one another.

If there's sin in our lives, if there's shortcomings, failures, convict us, make it clear and help us to know what we need to confess and turn from, show us how we need to change specifically.

Father, if there are some situations that you have touched us about that we see in another person's life, Lord, help us to be willing to get out of our comfort zone and because we love that person so much, help us to confront them in a spirit of love gently.

Father, if somebody comes to us, help us to listen and receive it as something done in love by a brother or sister in Christ.

[33 : 57] Lord, if there are people in this room who are not Christians, and all through this message, we've talked about Christians, Christian friends, you've convicted them that they're not one of yours, they're not one of your children.

They don't have any real Christian friends. Lord, so work in them right now that they have a desire to turn from the way they've been living away from you.

Call them to truly trust Jesus as their Savior and Lord and surrender their lives to Him now. help them to begin today to start developing real Christian friendships.

And let's just pray. Listen to the Lord and you obey Him during this time. And if I can pray with you, I'm here at the front, happy to do that right now. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.