

Galatians: The Power of Choice
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From Galatians 5:16-26: THE POWER OF CHOICE
PART 1: THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ANTI-FLESH v.1.

#1. "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh" v.1. *The personage* of the Holy Spirit connects, links or indexes the absolute world of God --> to the temporal world of men.

#2. And there is something else. The person (one thinking and acting) of the Holy Spirit drives a *wedge of separation* between the flesh and the mind of a man, living through human experience.

#3. As the actual author of the Word of God, the Holy Spirit puts the revealed language manifold of revelation between the desires of the flesh, on the one hand --> and the mind of a man, on the other.

#4. The Scriptures are not just history, not just doctrine, not just moral imperatives. The Bible is a wedge, generated by the Holy Spirit, to put a regulated distinction in place, between the flesh and the human mind. Human thought, speech and behavior are the direct results of this wedge. "...you will not carry out the desire of the flesh".

#5. What the Spirit calls the flesh is, of course, the material part of us; the body, the brain, the central nervous system. These terms, we may safely use interchangeably.

#6. The Holy Spirit, Himself, finds unacceptable, an unbroken unity between the flesh --> and the human mind. And He acts in opposition to that destructive unity. It is the source of sin and evil in the world, from Genesis 3 forward.

#7. Through the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit, the power of the flesh is torn away from the mind and our behavior. Should that not happen, then, the flesh remains as the controlling agent over the mind. Think of the disaster, in the personal life and in the aggregate society.

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PART 2: HOLY SPIRIT OPPOSITION v.17.

#1. "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another; so that you may not do the things that you please" v.17.

#2. Generalization from text to understanding presents to the mind the *strictures of an absolute law*. The law: One cannot give the power of choice over to sinful human nature. It is forbidden.

#3. The very projection of such a behavioral law on to human existence indicates something about the state of the human mind; its independence.

#4. The mind of a man, in any circumstance, situation or historical condition and by eternal design, possesses independence in the choices it makes. In this sense, the mind is independent of time, life, the body and even independent from the Lord.

#5. The power of choice is a human dynamic. The power of choice, once exercised, may prove wrong, but it is authentic.

#6. Enter the range of representations. Either the mind will give voice to the desires of the sinful nature or it will represent all possible human experience in terms of the voice of the Holy Spirit.

#7. ". . . So that you may not do the things that you please". Holy Spirit opposition is an active force in human temporal existence. His voice is definitive, determinant and final on earth.

#8. We are not judged by our personal social and cultural accomplishments, educational achievements, nor personal temporal contributions.

#9. Each of us, on earth, holds the key to his/her personal demise. And that of family, society, culture, nation. But the Holy Spirit holds the key to complete redemption. Holy Spirit opposition inclines to that end.

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PART 3: THE POINT OF ORDER v.18.

#1. "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law" v.18.

#2. This has to do with the use of Scripture. and its conjunction with faith. The Bible is a representational phenomenon. It teaches us how the Holy Spirit represents God and the temporal, material range of reality.

#3. Simply put, if one is a believer, every situation and circumstance has the same architecture. *Natural representations* supplied by the body, the brain, the central nervous system--the flesh--are the first ideas that come to us regarding any situation. These are time bound and inflected by historical conditions.

#4. Then comes what may be called *the point of order (the very next thing to do)*. Believers are to recognize this moment in time when all fleshly representations have been heard. Such ideas are contradicted by the representations of the Holy Spirit. Being time-bound, the natural ideas are limited.

#5. The enemies are too many; the walls are too high; the desert too inhospitable; the diagnosis too negative; ruin is inevitable.

#6. At the point of order, a believer leaves behind the natural and turns to ideas supplied by the revealed language manifold. This architecture never varies: natural representations --> point of order (moment of transcending the natural to the revealed) --> revealed representations.

#7. We leave behind time and its interpretation of events, when we turn to the Holy Spirit. The point of order precedes the moment of truth. Being led by the Holy Spirit through every situation and circumstance carries us beyond human wisdom and rationalism. It carries us to where the power is.

From Galatians 5:16-26: THE POWER OF CHOICE
PART 4: DIFFERENTIAL REASONING v.19-23.

#1. No human being has anything to say about what the Lord calls the "the deeds of the flesh" (v.19) or whether or not they are unacceptable. Such things are not the product of social consensus. They are expressions of the will of God.

#2. *The Word of God creates world categories of thought.* And that fact, therefore, creates categories of behavior.

#3. What is required, because of those two facts, is a kind of discernment that one may call *differential reasoning.*

#4. So essential is this way of thinking that it affects one's eternal destiny. ..."I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" v.21.

#5. The power of choice, in effect, stands between two very large-scale categories of personal behavior. On the one hand are "the deeds of the flesh" and on the other resides "the fruit of the Spirit" v.22-24. The power of choice blots out any ambiguity between the two. One is built on sinful human nature, and the other is founded upon the reasoning of the Holy Spirit, as revealed in His words.

#6. The power of choice is two-pronged. It *enables* the realization of one kind of behavior, as it *prevents* the rise of the other.

#7. Choices must develop into personalities. Each member of each category represents a way of reasoning and behavior. "Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" v.24.

#8. There are no political policy solutions to sin; no legal remedies. The deeds of the flesh constitute a way of reasoning bent to eventual personal and collective destruction. The fruit of the Spirit represent a differential reasoning that transforms human relations: "Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another" v.26.

From Galatians 5:16-26: THE POWER OF CHOICE
PART 5: A FREQUENT ISSUE.

#1. The controversial issue: Do men in human circumstances have the power of choice or does the determinism of the Almighty blot that out on some occasions? The textual references are usually Exodus 9:12 and the entirety of Romans 9. To those one adds Galatians 5:16-26.

#2. Another form of this same issue has to do with whether or not one passage of Scripture blots out the meaning of another?

#3. One suggests the idea of *mutual leverage* of one biblical text upon another.

#4. "And the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not listen to them, just as The Lord had spoken to Moses" Exodus 9:12. The reiteration is found in Romans 9:17, 18. So, does free will and the power of choice remain in place and compatible with the eternal purpose of God? "For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you,...'" Romans 9:17.

#5. Did the Pharaoh ever have the power of choice within his grasp? One suggests that the king of Egypt did possess the power of choice. But his choice fell on the "deeds of the flesh". Since the Lord raised up Pharaoh at such a time to fulfill an eternal purpose, mutual leverage certifies that the Almighty knew before the world was, that that man and at that time, would choose something other than the Lord's will in time.

#6. The Lord clashes with the power of choice and He does so before the world was created. Whether we want to or not, we will all fulfill the Lord's purpose, fixed for each one of us. At a moment in time, the Pharaoh chose to defy God. That choice came as no shock to his Creator.

From Galatians 5:16-26: THE POWER OF CHOICE
PART 6: THE BICAMARAL (TWO CHAMBERS) UNIVERSE OF THINGS.

#1. The "deeds of the flesh" represent a kind of person. Those who "live by the Spirit... (and who) also walk by the Spirit" (v.25), represent a very different kind of person.

#2. One chamber is concerned with and fueled by "the flesh with its passions and desires" v.24. Put political power, banking, research labs, technology, the judiciary, medicine, the military,

policing, education, journalism, parenting, the arts or anything else in the hands of such personalities, and degradation will follow.

#3. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law" v.22, 23.

#4. People of this character are rare. Cultures and societies are not the products of social engineering, advanced planning nor full employment. These aggregates are the results of the power of choice! And the power of choice is a matter of individual determination. Groups of people do not make decisions.

#5. The nightmare cities of our country are beyond the reach of legislation and law enforcement. But if they are beyond the reach of the word of God, then all is lost.

#6. People led by the Spirit are not naive, simple minded nor detached from the world in which they live. Quite to the contrary. Such personalities are the living opposition to the tidal wave of "passions and desires" that are eating us alive.

#7. Individual believers and their functioning aggregate, the church, hold frontline responsibilities in the "culture wars". The soul of a nation is at stake.

#8. The first and second amendments to the U.S. Constitution, for example, guarantee certain individual liberties. But because of the "deeds of the flesh", even those freedoms are being legislated against. Individual freedom can be misused.

#9. But against "the fruit of the Spirit", "there is no law" v.23. Everybody wants an honest neighbor.