

# A Deadly Tug of War

## Galatians 5:16-25

Jews were enticing the Gentile believers to live under the OT rules of Moses' Law

But living under regulations fails, and **brings out the sinfulness of the flesh—living by the Spirit is the only way**

### What?

#### **Cultivate spiritual fruit, and give selfishness the boot**

A Strong Promise, and its foundational truths—

The strength of the promise comes through in this literal translation of verse 16—“you will **never** bring to completion the desires of the flesh”

The fundamental truth in verse 17 is that **the Spirit and the flesh are at war with each other** within us

The flesh wants to thwart the Spirit, and the Spirit the flesh

But if you are led by the Holy Spirit, He **takes the place of the ineffective rules of the OT law**

He becomes our **inner, living righteousness**

That's the **only way of avoiding the specific deeds** of the flesh listed in verses 19-21

The other half is **cultivating the fruit of the Spirit (22-23)**

“Fruit” is singular, referring to **love**, which governs the rest

Notice **“joy, patience and kindness”** especially

Connection with Jesus—

Believers have already crucified the flesh when they turned to Jesus in faith; **our union with Him includes this crucifixion** of the old nature (verse 24)

*Romans 6:6, ESV—We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin*

So we're to **live as if that's true, with the Spirit's help**

**The Big Question—How can Paul say “*never* fulfill the desires of the flesh?”**

Desiring this to be true in our lives is part of the battle

Another important principle is **never to give up the fight**

To appropriate this promise, we need to understand how to walk by the Spirit (verse 16), be led by the Spirit (verse 18), and be in step with the Spirit (verse 25)

All these refer to **daily living that is directed and empowered by the Spirit**

To the extent that we do this, we will thwart the flesh

### So What?

#### **Cultivate spiritual fruit, and give selfishness the boot**

We can start each day by anticipating some of what faces us, and **bathing circumstances and relationships with prayer**

Walking by the Spirit, being led by the Spirit, staying in step with the Spirit also means **filling our minds with the things of God, so that our hearts desire the things of God, then praying** against the flesh and praying for the Spirit's filling and empowering

The last word—goes to Paul

*Romans 8:5, ESV—For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit*

### Now What?

Adopt a habit of morning prayer to bathe the events of the day in prayer and the Holy Spirit

Find ways to fill your mind with the things of God, rather than selfish pursuits