

# Our Security In Christ

## “Conflict Between Spirit And Flesh”

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The following article is the Seventh in a series of Discussions on the subject of “Our Security In Christ”.

*What does Galatians 5: 16—26 reveal to the Christian concerning his security in Christ?*

**16)** *This I Say Then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17) For The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: So that ye cannot do the things that ye would. 18) But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 19) Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20) Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21) Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22) But the fruit of the Spirit is Love, joy, Peace, Longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23) meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24) And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25) If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26) Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another (Galatians 5:16—26; see charts in this treatise).*

### ***The Theme Of This Treatise***

Romans is *first in order of the epistles*, doctrinally and in canonical order; and rightly so, for it contains all the basics of Christian education. Until its lessons are learned we are ignorant of true Christian principles and doctrines. It is the very foundation of church teaching, and if we are wrong in understanding here we shall also be wrong in elsewhere. The great theme is the revelation of God's wrath against sin, walking in His Spirit; and the righteousness through faith as the grounds of justification. Romans makes the entire world guilty before God and in need of salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ. The prominent feature is the long doctrinal section (1:16—8:39). God's method of dealing with Jews and Gentiles individually is strongly pictured in this section, and their relationship dispensationally is given in 9:1—11:36. Paul teaches the necessity of *walking in the Spirit* in order that we *overcome* the law of sin and death in our lives. This paper deals mostly with Romans 8 and Galatians 5.

### ***What's Happening In The Church At Galatia***

The Apostle Paul received the supernatural revelation from the Holy Spirit Himself – the truth – *that they that are in Christ have crucified the flesh* (Gal. 5:24), for the flesh is under the law. This is identical to Paul's teaching in Romans 8. But, What's really happening here?

In Galatians 1:6—7, Paul is addressing a problem concerning false teaching in the body of Christ. Teachers who were of Jewish blood attempted to distort Paul's teachings where salvation is concerned, in that, though they agreed with the believers that salvation comes by faith, they also attempted to persuade the believers of a different gospel. This gospel taught saints should not only *trust in Jesus*, but should also include the following as requirements for salvation:

- 1) incorporate circumcision into the faith (Gal. 5:2);
- 2) incorporate other works of the law (3:5);
- 3) keeping Jewish holy days (4:10).

In Galatians 4:21-31, Paul speaks of the law and the experience of Abraham, addressing the false teachers' foundational respect for Abraham (3:6-9) and the Galatians' infatuation with living *under the law*. To clinch this lengthy argument within the church concerning the bondage *of the law* and the freedom found in Christ Jesus, Paul uses as examples the two sons of Abraham. These are Ishmael, who was born of the bondswoman Hagar (Vs 24); and Isaac who was born of Sarah, the rightful wife of Abraham and a freewoman. Appropriately, Paul counters the Jewish false teachers' zeal for the law with an argument based on the Law, the Pentateuch (Genesis 16: 15; and 21:2). Paul uses this allegory to prove his point because it was a rhetorical technique the false teachers used. In other words, Paul was demonstrating he could argue from the Law just as well as they could, but to prove that the Law of Moses pointed to the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

In Genesis 16, Abraham and Sarah attempted to fulfill God's promise through their own strength, using Hagar, a bondswoman. In spite of the complications caused by "fleshly" alternatives, Sarah, a freewoman, eventually saw the miraculous working of God's promise in the birth of Isaac (Gen. 12:2; 15:4).

Continuing in Galatians 4:21-31, Paul was using the common Jewish allegorical method of the day to make his point. He used this approach to draw a stark contrast between *two biblical covenants* at odds with each other in the churches in Galatia; the *Abrahamic promise* (Gen. 12:1—3) and the *Law* God gave Moses. Paul compared Jerusalem, the center of Jewish life, to Mount Sinai, the birthplace of the Law.

The *Jerusalem above* (Galatians 4: 26) represents the Jewish hope of heaven finally coming to earth (Rev.21: 22). Since "us all" in this verse refers to those who are free through faith in Christ (vs. 7), Paul was strongly implying that the question at hand was not allegiance to Jerusalem, but allegiance to *which* Jerusalem – the *new*, or the *old*? Would the Galatians follow the shortsighted present Jerusalem and her legalism or the liberty of the heavenly Jerusalem which hath kept "us all" (believers) free?

In vs. 27, Paul quotes Isaiah 54:1, using the prophesied restoration of Israel from judgment and exile to show how the later-born children of promise (church) would someday far outnumber the earlier offspring.

At this point, Paul's allegory is based on Genesis 21:9—10. Isaac was continually persecuted by his older half brother Ishmael. Eventually, Ishmael and mother Hagar were expelled because Ishmael had no standing in God's eyes as heir of Abraham. In creating a parallel between the story from Genesis and the Galatians' situation, Paul points out that 1) the persecution by the Jewish legalists of his day was not unexpected, and 2) it would not go on indefinitely because the legalists (as was Hagar and Ishmael) would soon be cast out.

In Galatians 5:1, Paul *commands* the Church: "Stand fast *therefore* in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage."

Galatians 4:31 states, "*So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondswoman but of the free.*" *So then* represents the conclusion of the previous verses, while *therefore* (5:1) indicates Paul is applying this spiritual truth to the lives of the Galatian believers. To be children of the bondswoman (law) is to be enslaved to that covenant from Mt. Sinai (4: 24, 25), the Law of Moses. To be of the free children is to follow Abraham's example of faith (3: 6-9), to be "born according to the Spirit (3:2; 4:29), and to be destined for the "Jerusalem above" (4:26). Understanding these realities, the believer in Christ Jesus must *continually stand fast in the liberty of not returning to Moses' Law* in order to be saved unto liberty. With the false teachers, the Galatians had been on the verge of becoming enslaved once again to the Law.

In Galatians 5:2—3, Paul points out that that changes the entire orientation of salvation away from God's grace to one's own actions. One who is circumcised in attempt to gain acceptance from God is obligated to keep the whole law, which history has abundantly demonstrated no one can do (Rom. 3, 10—18).

### ***Who We Are After Salvation***

He (Paul), in addressing the Church at Corinth, said, *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: behold, all things are become new.”* (2 Cor. 5:17).

Through the creative command of God (2 Cor. 5-7), those who accept Jesus Christ by faith are made a new creation that belongs fully to the family of God; a child of the King ruled by His precious Spirit (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:25; Eph. 2:10). The believer becomes a new person from inside out, supernaturally ruled, and led by the Spirit – by his own (believer’s) desire to be led by the Spirit (Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2: 10,15; 4: 24; Col. 3:10), sharing His Glory (2 Cor. 3:18) with renewed knowledge (Col. 3:10) and understanding (Rom. 12: 2), and living a life of holiness unto God.

Jesus, by the Holy Spirit, commanded His Church through Apostle Paul per supernatural revelation, to *always walk in the Spirit*, not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh; for there is a mighty spiritual battle raging in the life of the believer and in the heavenlies – continually – for the souls of man. So if the believer begins to walk in the flesh, the battle favors satan and his hordes from hell. Paul said we cannot *continue to walk in the flesh* while, at the same time *claiming* the Spirit of the Lord. At some point, the Holy Spirit will reluctantly leave us.

Remember, Paul said by the Spirit, *“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we are led by the Spirit, we are not under the law.”* When Paul wrote this statement, he likely referred to the Galatians who fell away after a short time, specifically to return to the law of the Old Covenant. However, to Christians today, if we fall away, spiritually speaking, we also fall under the law.

### ***The Spirit Delivers From The Power Of Sin***

*THERE IS “therefore now” no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit* (Romans 8:1-4).

Referring back to the chart in the Fourth part of this series concerning the commentary on Chapter Seven, Verse 6: *“But Now, we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit of life and not in the oldness of the letter of the law.”* This is a very important confirmation that Paul (not Saul), in his penning the scriptures, taught the difference between the Dispensation of the Law of sin and death and the Law of Life in the Spirit, and was “The Apostle” most likely writing about his own past, prior to his conversion to Christ (Saul), but now, he (Paul) walks in the Spirit!

*“But God/But now”* (also *“therefore now”*, as in Chapter 8:1) . . .In these areas of the Word of God, the expression *“But Now/therefore now”* \* points back to the foregoing argument concerning condemnation of the entire world, as contrast with the present newness of life. Prior to this expression the Jew, Gentile...all were under sin. Every mouth is stopped and the world stands guilty before God. There is nothing man can say. God almighty, Creator of man and the universe, declares that all are under His Judgment, because of mankind’s sin. *But God...But Now\** shows the fulfillment of Grace and Life in the Spirit! [\*See References: Jn. 1:17; Rom. 3:2; 6:22; 7:6; 8:1; 15:23; 16:26; 1 Cor. 2:12; 12:18; 13:12; Gal. 1:23; 2:20; 3:14; 4:9; Eph. 5:8; Phil. 1:20; 2:12; 14:10, etal.]

Paul has just shown that life without the grace of Christ is defeat, misery, and bondage to sin. Now in Chapter 8, Paul tells us that spiritual life, freedom from condemnation, victory over sin, and fellowship with God come through union with Christ by the indwelling Holy Spirit. By receiving and following the Spirit, we are delivered from the power of sin and are led onward to final glorification in Christ. This experience is the normal Christian life under the full provisions of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The “*Law of the Spirit of Life*” is the regulating and activating power and life of the Holy Spirit operating in the heart of the believer. The Holy Spirit enters into the sinner and frees him or her from the power of sin (cf. 7:23). The law of the Spirit comes into full operation as believers *commit* themselves to be *obedient* to the Holy Spirit (vss 4-5; 13-14). They find a new power operating within, a power allowing them to *overcome sin*. They may also choose to disregard this authority and power by the Holy Spirit and continue as they were – believing they cannot possibly stop sinning anyway; and though we all fail sometimes, there are sins in which we must rid ourselves of – else we soon will not continue in Christ (vss 6-8).

It’s those sins of the flesh mentioned in Galatians 5:19-21 – in contrast to the fruits of the Spirit following, in verses 22-26. These fruits of the Spirit are so important to this treatise that I have written them in once again: 22) “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23) Meekness, temperance: against which there is no law. 24) And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25) If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit 26) Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.*”

The Holy Spirit working within believers allows us to live a life of righteousness seen as the fulfillment of God’s moral law. Thus, the operation of grace and obedience to the law of God are not in conflict at all (cf. 2:13; 3:31; 6:15; 7:12, 14). They both point to righteousness and holiness.

Paul describes two classes of people: those who live according to the flesh and those who live according to the Spirit. 1) To live “after the flesh” (Flesh is the sinful area/s of all mankind; and is *under the law*) is to desire to take pleasures in, be occupied with, and gratify the corrupt lusts of the his flesh, including fornication, adultery, hatred, selfish ambition, outburst of anger, etc., (Gal. 5:19-21); but also includes obscenity, pornographic addiction of every kind, drug addiction, and the like.

### ***The Works Of The Flesh. . .***

**19)** *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20) Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21) Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.*” (Gal. 5:19-21). No passage in the Bible draws a clearer contrast between the lifestyle of the Spirit-filled believer and that of the sinful human nature than Gal. 5:16-26. Paul not only discussed the difference in lifestyles by emphasizing that the Spirit and the flesh are a war with each other, but he includes a specific list both of the works of the flesh and of the fruit of the Spirit.

**WORKS OF THE FLESH.** “Flesh” (Gk. *sarx*) is the sinful element in human nature with its corrupt desires. It remains within the Christian after his conversion and is a deadly enemy to him (Rom. 8:6-8,13; Gal. 5:17,21). Those who practice the deeds of the flesh cannot inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:21). Hence, they must be resisted and put to death in a continual warfare that the believer wages through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:4-14; see Gal. 5:17, note). The works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21) include:

- (1) “Adultery” (Gk. *moicheia*), i.e., sexual relations of a married person with someone other than his or her spouse (cf. Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18; Mat. 5:31-32);
- (2) “Fornication” (Gk. *porneia*), i.e., immoral sexual conduct and intercourse; it includes taking pleasure in pornographic pictures, films, or writing (cf. Mat. 5:32; 19:9; Acts 15:20,29; 21:25; 1 Cor. 5:1);
- (3) “Uncleanness” (Gk. *akatharsia*), i.e., sexual sins, evil deeds, and vices, including thoughts and desires of the heart (Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5);
- (4) “Lasciviousness” (Gk. *aselgeia*), i.e., sensuality, following one’s passions and desires to the point of having no shame or public decency (2 Cor. 12:21);

- (5) "Idolatry" (Gk. *Eidololatria* i.e., worship of spirits, persons, or graven images, also trust in any person, institution, or thing as having equal or greater authority than God and His Word (Col. 3:5);
- (6) "Witchcraft" (Gk. *pharmakeia*), i.e., sorcery, spiritism, black magic, worship of demons, and use of drugs to produce "spiritual" experiences (Ex. 7:11,22; 8:18; Rev. 9:21; 18:23);
- (7) "Hatred" (Gk. *echthra*), i.e., intense, hostile intentions and acts, extreme dislike or enmity;
- (8) "Variance" (Gk. *eris*), i.e., arguing, antagonism; struggle for superiority (Rom. 1:29; 1 Cor. 1:11; 3:3);
- (9) "Emulations" (Gk. *zelos*), i.e., resentfulness, envy of another's success (Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 3:3);
- (10) "Wrath" (Gk. *thumos*), i.e., explosive anger/rage that flares into violent words and deeds (Col. 3:8);
- (11) "Strife" (Gk. *eritheia*), i.e., selfish ambition and seeking of power (2 Cor. 12:20; Phil. 1:16-17);
- (12) "Seditions" (Gk. *dichostasia*), i.e., divisive teachings not supported by God's Word (Rom. 16:17);
- (13) "Heresies" (Gk. *hairesis*), i.e., division within the congregation into selfish groups or cliques, which destroy the unity of the church (1 Cor. 11:19);
- (14) "Envyings" (Gk. *phthonos*), i.e., resentful dislike of another person who has something that one desires;
- (15) "Murders" (Gk. *phonos*), i.e., killing a person unlawfully and with malice;
- (16) "Drunkenness" (Gk. *methe*), i.e., impairing one's mental or physical control by alcoholic drink;
- (17) "Revellings" (Gk. *komos*), i.e., excessive feasting, revelry, a party spirit involving alcohol, drugs, sex, or the like.

Paul's final comment on the works of the flesh is stern and forceful: *any so-called Christian/s who engage in these types of activities shut themselves out of the kingdom of God, i.e., they do not possess eternal salvation* (Gal. 5:21; see 1 Cor. 6:9, note).

### **... And The Fruit Of The Spirit**

22) *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law"* (Gal. 5:22-23).

**THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.** Contrasted to the works of the flesh is a single-minded lifestyle called "the fruit of the Spirit." This is produced in God's children as they allow the Spirit to so direct and influence their lives that they destroy the power of sin, *especially the works of the flesh*, and walk in fellowship with God (see Rom. 8:5-14, note; 8:14, note; cf. 2 Cor. 6:6; Eph. 4:2-3; 5:9; Col. 3:12-15; 2 Pet. 1:4-9). The fruit of the Spirit includes:

- (1) "**Love**" (Gk. *agape*), i.e., a caring and seeking for the highest good of another person without motive for personal gain (Rom. 5:5; 1 Cor. 13; Eph. 5:2; Col. 3:14);
- (2) "**Joy**" (Gk. *chara*), i.e., the feeling of gladness based on the love, grace, blessings, promises, and nearness of God that belong to those who believe in Christ (Ps. 119:16; 2 Cor. 6:10; 12:9; 1 Pet. 1:8; see Phil. 1:14);
- (3) "**Peace**" (Gk. *eirene*), i.e., the quietness of heart and mind based on the knowledge that all is well between the believer and his or her heavenly Father (Rom. 15:33; Phil. 4:7; 1 Thes. 5:23; Heb. 13:20);
- (4) "**Longsuffering**" (Gk. *makrothumia*), i.e., endurance, patience, being slow to anger or despair (Eph. 4:2; 2 Tim. 3:10; Heb. 12:1);
- (5) "**Gentleness**" (Gk. *chrestotés*), i.e., not wanting to hurt someone or give them pain (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:12);
- (6) "**Goodness**" (Gk. *agathosune*), i.e., zeal for truth and righteousness and a hatred for evil; it can be expressed in acts of kindness (Luke 7:37-50) or in rebuking and correcting evil (Mat. 21:12-13);
- (7) "**Faith**" (Gk. *pistis*), i.e., faithfulness, firm and unswerving loyalty and adherence to a person to whom one is united by promise, commitment, trustworthiness, and honesty (Mat. 23:23; Rom. 3:3; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:2; 4:7; Tit. 2:10);
- (8) "**Meekness**" (Gk. *prautes*), i.e., restraint coupled with strength and courage; it describes a person who can be angry when anger is needed and humbly submissive when submission is needed (2 Tim. 2:25; 1 Pet. 3:15; for meekness in Jesus, compare Mat. 11:29 with Mat. 23; Mark 3:5; in Paul, compare 2 Cor. 10:1 with 10:4-6; Gal. 1:9; in Moses, compare Num. 12:3 with Ex. 32:19-20);

(9) "**Temperance**" (Gk. *egkrateia*), i.e., having control or mastery over one's own desires and passions, including faithfulness to one's marriage vows; also purity, chastity (1 Cor. 9:25; Tit. 1:8; 2:5).

Paul's final comment on the fruit of the Spirit indicates that there are no restrictions to the lifestyle indicated here. Christians can—in fact, should—practice these virtues over and over again; they will never discover a law prohibiting them from living according to these principles.

**Grace Versus The Law**

The Galatian believers, under pressure from Jewish legalists, were considering rejecting the gospel of grace and reverting back to dependence on the Mosaic Law for salvation. Paul wrote this letter to outline the dramatic differences between the two approaches of God.	
<b>GRACE...Liberty</b>	<b>LAW... Flesh</b>
Based On Faith (Galatians 2:16)	Based On Works (Galatians 2:16)
Justifies Sinful Men (vs.2, 16, 17)	Incapable Of Justification (2:16; 3:11)
Begins & Ends With Christ (2:20)	Makes Christ Nothing (5:3)
The Way Of The Spirit (3:2, 3, 14)	The Way Of The Flesh (3:3)
A "Blessing" (3:14)	A "Curse" (3:13)
God's Desired End For His People (3:23-25)	Intended To Be A Means To An End (3:23-25)
Results In Intimacy With Christ (3:27)	Results In Estrangement From Christ (5:4)
Makes One A Son Of God & Heir Of Christ (4:6, 7)	Keeps One A Slave (4:7)
Brings Liberty To Believer (5:1)	Results In Bondage (5:1)
Relys On The Power Of The Spirit (5:16-18,22,23)	Depends On Human Effort (5:19-21)
Motivated By Love (5: 13, 14)	Motivated By Pride (6:3, 13, 14)
Centers On The Cross Of Christ Jesus (6:12-14)	Centered On Circumcision (5:11; 6:12-15)

<b>Blessings/Benefits Of Walking In The Holy Spirit Romans Eight</b>	<b>Horrors Of Walking In The Flesh Romans Seven/Eight*</b>
There is <i>NO</i> Condemnation (v.1)	Has dominion over us for the duration (v. 1)
Be free from the law of sin (v. 2)	Bound by that law, sin and death (v.1)
Be free from eternal death (v. 2)	An adulterer if married to Christ (v.3)
Sin is condemned in our flesh (v. 3)	Alive to (under) the law (v.4, 6)
The righteousness of the law be fulfilled in us (v. 4)	Evil passions by the law are at work (v.5)
Walks <i>NOT</i> in the flesh (vs.1-4)	From the Law, We see the evil of sin (v.7)
We can enjoy the things of the Spirit of life (v. 5)	Produces all manner of evil desire (v. 8)
Abundant life and peace (v. 6)	It is not possible to Please God (vs. 1—8)
Have the mind of Christ (v. 7; Phil. 2:5)	We are lost, without a Savior. (v. 9)
God is pleased with us; blesses us (v. 8)	It destroys our lives (v. 9, 10)
Operation of the gifts of the Spirit (vs. 9)	It deceives and destroys us (v. 11)
We are assured we belong to Christ Jesus (v. 9)	It works death in us (v. 13)
Our bodies are dead to sin (v. 10)	We become carnal, then destruction (v. 14)
Righteousness/Holiness are pleasing to Christ (v. 10)	Don't practice doing good, but evil (v. 15)
The body is dead because of sin (v. 10)	Makes us live under the law (v. 16)
Spirit is life because of righteousness (v. 10)	Puts us in denial about our sin (v. 17)
Our mortal body be quickened by His Spirit (v.11)	We are fully unable to do what's right (v. 18)
We ever crucify the flesh (v 12, 13)	We do not practice good, but do evil (v. 19)
Eternal Life (v. 13)	Captives under law of sin and death. (v. 23)
Life by mortification of the body, or flesh (v. 13)	Need deliverance from body of death! (v. 24)
Are the sons of God (v. 14)	It Brings condemnation (8:1)

Rec'd the Spirit Of Adoption, "Abba, Father" (v.15)	The law of sin and death rules (v. 2)
Spirit bears witness "we are children of God (v. 16)	The law could not bring redemption (v. 3)
Heirs with God; Joint heirs with Christ (v. 17)	Minds only the things of the flesh (v. 5)
Suffering now..no comparison with Glory then (v. 18)	The carnal mind brings forth death (v. 6)
Await manifestation of sons of God (v. 19)	The carnal mind is enmity against God (v 7)
Delivered from corruption to glorious liberty (v. 21)	The flesh cannot please God (v. 7)
Have firstfruits of the Spirit (vs. 22, 23)	The carnal mind is not subject to God (v. 8)
Eternal redemption of the body (v. 23)	The carnal man of fleshly lusts, is lost (v. 9)
Helps infirmities; He makes intercession for us (v. 24)	
We wait patiently for what we cannot see yet. (v. 25)	
Spirit helps us pray; intercedes with groaning (v. 26)	
Search our hearts; what is the mind of Spirit (v. 27)	
We know all things work together for good.. (v. 28)	
Predestined us to be conformed to Son's image (v. 29)	
Are called, justified, and glorified (v. 30)	
If God be for us, who can be against us? (v. 31)	
He will freely Give us all things (v. 32)	
Who shall lay anything to the charge of His? (v. 33)	
No one can condemn; Christ intercedes for us. (v. 34)	
No one can separate us from the love of Christ? (v 35)	
We are more that conquerors through Christ. (vs. 37)	
Not death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come can separate us from the love of Christ Jesus our Lord. (vs. 38)	
Nor height, depth, any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (vs. 39)	Above are those who <i>refuse to consistently</i> walk after the Spirit, but do walk after the flesh; they are under the law, and are lost.*
<b>All This—if we continue to walk in the Holy Spirit!</b>	<b>All This—if we continue to walk by the law of sin &amp; death!</b>

\*If we walk in the flesh (carnality), we are not walking in the Spirit. It's not possible to walk in both the flesh and in the Holy Spirit at the same time. We are under the Law of Moses if we walk in the flesh, and do not belong to Christ Jesus; but to walk in the Spirit is the Law of Life and Liberty in Christ Jesus. (Rom. 8:1-16; and Gal. 5:1, 16-25, with attention to verse 24). Therefore...If we continue to follow after the flesh, believing we cannot break evil habits, we are no under Grace, but are under the Law. We are lost without Jesus Christ in our lives. [NOTE: In Romans 8: 1-13, Paul explains contrasts between the *walk in the Spirit* and the *walk in the flesh* (under the Law). In Romans 8:16-39, Paul shows us the blessings and benefits of *walking consistently by the Holy Spirit*.]

**Take It By Force!** [The means by which the Christian may be an overcomer]

"From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and violent take it by force" (Matt. 11:12. Violence and force are not words we often think of in Christianity. But, there they are, big as life, by the Lord himself. A powerful truth, often eluded by the church, is contained in this verse.

For about three centuries there was great darkness upon the earth, with no record of any great prophets. The Pharisees and Sadducees were some of the leaders of God's people. You need only to read of these leaders in the gospels to discern where Israel was spiritually. They needed a savior "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death".

The devil was probably on vacation somewhere, so little threat did he feel from mankind at this juncture in history. But, to this dark world was sent the mightiest prophet of all time, John the Baptist, filled with the Spirit, living a fasting life on locusts and honey, hidden away in the wilderness till the time of "his showing unto Israel." But, when once his voice "crying in the wilderness" was at last heard in Israel, Satan's vacation abruptly came to an end, as he began his counterattack to the launching of God's eternal plan of deliverance for His people. "God's Kingdom" began "suffering violence".

The kingdom of heaven is the place where God desires to establish his ruler-ship in our lives: his salvation, his deliverance, his power, his healing, his victory. This invisible realm is where the angels ascend and descend from the presence of God to "minister to those who are to be heirs of salvation" Heb. 1:14. However, this arena of the kingdom is also the battlefield of the devil, where we "wrestle" with "spiritual wickedness in high places". Eph. 6:12. Who will control this territory?

From John's days forward, the powers of the darkness of this world began violently resisting every attempt of heaven to establish God's kingdom on earth. After John's very short ministry, (scholars say perhaps only 6-18 months duration), Satan succeeded in having John beheaded. But, the battle continued to rage. Thus Jesus taught that God's kingdom, and his rulership in our lives, would be established on this earth only if "the violent take it by force". Violent, take, and force: we are focusing on these words this month.

**Violent:** In the Greek, the word translated violent is "biastes" and means "energetic". The root word is "bia" which means "vital activity", akin to "Bios" which means "Life"(from a sermon by Jack Hayford"). In simple words, to get violent means you get animated, you expend energy, and are vitally active. In the natural, violence pictures something strong, quick, unexpected, painful, and dominating.

Picture a man with a gun, forcing someone to give him his money, pushing him to the ground, taking his possessions away from him. This in the natural shows what really happens in the spiritual. A Christian determines to take back what the Devil has stolen from him, so he uses a weapon ("The weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (II Cor. 10:4) and forces him to the ground, then violently rips out of his hands his possession, leaving him wounded, beaten, and empty handed.

We are to be meek and humble toward men, but we are to be mean and violent toward the devil. "These signs shall follow them that believe, in my name, they shall CAST OUT DEVILS" (Mark 16:17). We don't show them politely to the door, or beg them to leave. No, we Cast them out! This is a violent act. When I cast devils out of people, I am loud. I am mad at what they have done to their victim. I get violent in my intercession.

On the phone a man once told me glibly and condescendingly, "the Lord will show you don't have to yell at demons". Then, later in the conversation admitted that he still smoked. He had never gotten violent about the demons that had him in bondage to nicotine, yet had the gall to tell me I didn't need to get violent against demons. If you can get violent without getting angry and loud, it's OK! But, do get violent (animated)!

There are other ways to get violent in spiritual warfare. For instance, fasting. Doesn't your stomach get violent when you fast? God has chosen fasting as the "atomic bomb" of spiritual warfare. Jesus did it 40 days before starting his ministry. Daniel 10 shows that there was warfare going on in the heavenlies while Daniel was on a "no pleasant bread" fast. Eventually, the devil could no longer stand the violence of his fasting, as Michael at last came to the rescue and wrestled the "prince of Persia" out of the way of the answer to Daniel's prayer. You can get violent in your prayers, in praise, singing, dancing, shouting, vehemently quoting scriptures to an invisible foe!

"The kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." (Luke 16:16). No man is going to get saved without shoving aside the demons of unbelief. We must press past the "Sunday go to meeting" crowds who are stuck in the quicksand of mediocrity.

Consider the verb used in conjunction with spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6:12: "wrestle" Wrestling involves pressure, pressing with all your might against the foe. In a wrestling match, one is going to go backward and one is going to move forward. One is going to be on the bottom and one is going to be on the top. It's the same with the devil. Who's on top in your life?

The reason we must get violent and apply pressure is the devil has built "strongholds" of defense. A stronghold is any area of our life where the devil has planted the flag and claimed victory. He controls the situation. He dictates the terms. Thus, II Cor. 10:3-5 says, "pulling down strongholds" and "bringing into captivity". It's war. But, it is not a defensive war. It's offensive in nature.

Defensive Christians are just trying to stay saved, satisfied with the status quo, defending their few goods from the devil's attacks. But, offensive Christians aren't satisfied with past accomplishments or rest on their present laurels. They ever press against the gates of Hell to pull down more and more of Satan's strongholds. "Submit yourselves therefore to God; resist the devil and he will flee from you."

I counseled with a couple who were struggling with their marriage last year. I spoke with them again this year and asked them, "What are you doing differently this year that you weren't doing last year. Because, if you're not doing something different than you were doing last year, then next year, you'll be the same as you are now." In other words, they have to get violent about recovering their marriage. The status quo is the enemy of the Christian. That brings us to the next word, a verb-action!

**Take:** Jesus said the violent "take it". In other words, it is our decision and it is our responsibility. This is not something God does for us. I read a book once by a doctor who believed that the best thing you can do for a cold is fast. The 2nd best thing is to just drink clear fluids. (I have found this is true! You'll be amazed how quickly symptoms abate if you just start drinking only fruit juice, chicken broth, etc.). But, then he said something funny. He said, "some people like to keep their colds longer." He suggested they eat fruit. Christians are the same way: Some Christians like to keep their sins and weights longer. They don't want to "take" the necessary measures to "fight the good fight" or to "lay hold on eternal life" (I Tim. 6:12).

I was 15. The dance was over, and I needed a ride home. My cousin and I had met an older youth who had taken us for a drive in his "mother's car" earlier in the evening. We asked him if he wouldn't mind driving us home. He didn't, so my cousin and I and two girls we had met piled into his car. I was in the back seat. As we drove down a busy street, there were suddenly red lights behind us. I said, "it's a fire truck, pull over!" The driver responded, "fire truck nothing, it's the cops!"

With that, he sped up and tried to out run them. It was funny and it was exciting at first. But, then I started thinking to myself, "if those cops start trying to shoot out the tires (that's what they did in the old movies), we might get killed!" So, I learned forward, reached in the front seat area, and pulled the keys out of the ignition. The car rolled to a stop, as the driver jumped out informing us, "run, this is a stolen car!"

He didn't get 75 feet from the car before he was tackled by an officer. They took us all to the station, but let us go later after determining we were innocents'. I violently (contrary to the driver's will) had to TAKE hold of the key that "forced" the car to a stop. That's what we have to do with the devil too! Don't let him drive!! That's why in Matt. 16:19, Jesus said, "*I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.*"

The keys are in the ignition of heaven, waiting for us to TAKE them. But, He adds, "whatever you bind will be bound in heaven." The kingdom will not happen without us. God wants to use us to bind Satan's power.

There are strongholds in our family, community or personal life that will not be removed without violent determination. Charles Finney said, "revival is no more miraculous than a crop of wheat. In any community, revival can be secured from heaven when heroic souls enter the conflict determined to win or die." It's the same with personal strongholds. It *takes* an act of the will, and it is an action. What action do we take?

**Force:** Police enFORCE the law with weapons, and FORCE criminals to surrender. "Force" in Matt. 11:12 means the use of weapons God has given us ("weapons of our warfare", 11 Corinthians 10:3; "armor of God", Ephesians 6:11-18; "keys to the kingdom", Matthew 16:19). What are the keys God has given us, that unleash heaven's power? What are these weapons that when used provide force enough to move the devil? Here is a list of 12 of these weapons in their scriptural context relating to spiritual warfare (no specific order):

### ***Twelve Irresistable Spiritual Weapons Of Our Warfare***

**1. Faith:** "ABOVE ALL, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6:16). "Whom resist steadfast in the faith" (1 Pet. 5:8-10)

**2. Peace:** In the Old Covenant, Our Lord was often called, "The Lord Of Hosts", meaning He is a Warring God who stands alone. He lifts men up and He breaks them down at His own choosing. The Lord of Hosts was the protector of His people. But in the New Covenant, we often refer to Him as the "God Of Peace"...who will shortly injure Satan under our feet! (Romans 16:20).

**3. The Word of God:** (this is the most important weapon!) "the sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17). "For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Alive! (John 1:1-5; 17:5,17).

**4. The name of Jesus:** "And these signs shall follow them that believe; *In my name* shall they cast out devils; *they shall speak with new tongues*; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (Mark 16:17,18).

**5. The blood of the Lamb:** "they overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the lamb" (Rev. 12:11).

**6. The mouth (faith's confession):** When Jesus was being tempted of the devil, three times he quoted to Satan what the Word had to say, saying: "*It is written*" (Matt 4:4, 7, 10). (See Rom 10:9,10)

**7. Praying in the Spirit:** "*Praying always* with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. 6:18).

**8. Righteousness:** "...having on the breastplate of righteousness" (Eph. 6:14; Zech. 3:1-5).

**9. Praise:** "Out of the mouth of babes ... (Matthew 21:16). "thou hast perfected praise" (quoting and defining Psalm 8:2 which adds), "that thou mayest still the enemy". Praise is the weapon that stills the enemy. (See also II Chron. 20 and Acts 16:25,6).

**10. Fasting and prayer:** Daniel's fast binding the Prince of Persia in Daniel 10. Also Matt. 17:17-21, "This kind (of demon) goeth not out by prayer and fasting".

**11. Wisdom:** "Unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10); The entire Chapter of Prov 8; "by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war" (Prov. 24:6); "A wise man scalesh the city of the mighty, and casteth down the strength of the confidence thereof" (Prov. 21:22). Get God's strategy for your war! It's called wisdom.

**12. Bind And Loose:** Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do men believe I Am?” ..Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Mt16:16-19; 1 John 4:15; and Revelation 1:17,18).

Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Mt 18: 18-20)

***These are the benefits of binding and loosing:***

- 1. The Keys To The Kingdom Of God:** Jesus gave Peter, as representative of His supernatural Church, the keys to the Kingdom of God. These keys carried all authority over the enemy of our souls. Then, in Revelation 1:17,18 Jesus said, “Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death.” Here, Jesus comforted John the Revelator in that He – being the Alpha and Omega, the First and The Last, The Beginning and The End, the Eternal One – is in full control of the times – forever.
- 2. Our Authority In Spiritual Warfare:** Whatever we bind on earth is bound in heaven; and whatever we loose on earth is loosed in heaven. Jesus, sitting at the right hand of His Father is agreement with this authority and power He gave His Own Church. Jesus stressed this truth in 2 chapters of Matthew!
- 3. Two In Agreement:** As often as possible, we should have at least one prayer mate who will agree with us as touching anything that we ask on earth. Jesus promised His Father would accomplish this!
- 4. Two Or Three Gathered In His Name:** He promised to be there in their midst. Don’t forget God’s multiplication tables! *“And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword”* (Lev 26:8).

“How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up” (Deu 32:30)?

“These [are] they that went over Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all his banks; and they put to flight all [them] of the valleys, [both] toward the east, and toward the west” (1Ch 12:15).

“A 1,000 shall fall at thy side, and 10,000 at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee” (Psalm 91:7).

The next time you are under Satanic attack, go through this list of keys and weapons. One by one TAKE each one of them in your hand and in your mouth and get VIOLENT in your warfare. The FORCE (dunamis) inherent in each of them will with God's power enable you to see the promise fulfilled:

*“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled”*  
(2 Corinthians 10: 3-6). —Tom Stephens

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