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Galatians
Chapter 5 - Christ Sets Free
The Key to Freedom (vs.16-18)

Galatians 5:16-18: But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 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. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

2 Corinthians 3:17 says that the Lord is Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there's liberty. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there's freedom. How can you tell that the Spirit of the Lord is working in people's hearts? There's freedom. We've been called to set people free, not to put them in bondage. The message of our gospel is, "Your sins are forgiven. You've been set free." And that's what God

has called us to do. How wonderful that message is. Think about that, that God has allowed us to not be the policeman, but to be the fireman; to go in and rescue. I'd much rather rescue than I would incarcerate. So, God has given us a wonderful job and a wonderful work as believers. It is at this point that he begins with in Galatians 5, "It was for freedom that Christ came to set us free," and it is the freedom that he's talking about throughout this particular chapter. He is emphasizing this wonderful work of freedom and how we so strangely are prone to go back into slavery in our own minds and our own hearts. I'm going to say something that is probably going to take some of you aback, but I have actually found that Christians are often more conflicted and more miserable than non-believers. I think in many respects it's what he's talking about in this particular chapter because the problem with Christians is they have not only a conscience, but they have the Spirit of God that is revealing to them the truth and they are sensitive in the sense of their sin. We know this to be true; more heightened. Whereas, somebody that really is not concerned about doing the right thing, you tell them,

“Hey, you know you are robbing a bank and that's wrong.” And they go, “So?” And they actually seem to be happy about it, but if a believer were involved in such an act, he'd be miserable and go home miserable; wouldn't be able to sleep; wouldn't be able to get any rest. We as believers sometimes play both ends. We play the end of the flesh in the sense of “I think I can handle this,” and yet we realize that we can't, and then we fail. When we fail and we fall, we are extremely miserable, and then we go back into the realm of, “But I need to pick myself up and I need to do the right thing,” and it seems like the harder we try to do the right thing, the more we fail. So, we make all these commitments and promises, and we literally are making ourselves miserable. This message comes back to us and goes, “You do know why Christ came? It was to set you free from these things, and He wants you walking according to the Spirit which sets you free.” So many times, I have read passages like this, especially growing up. I grew up in the church and so I would hear them talk about the Spirit of God, and I'm going, “I don't get it. What is the Spirit thing?” People throw around words, don't they? “I'm being led by the

Spirit.” And I'm looking at them going, “It doesn't look like it. I guess if you say so.” So, what the Spirit of God looks like and who He is and how He functions in our life is sometimes pretty ambiguous because of the fact that we're seeing lies and we're not hearing the truth. If nothing else, what I want to convey to you today is what it means to be moved by the Spirit, what it means to walk in the Spirit, and how you and I can do that in a very real way rather than just throw out the word, “Spirit.”

We're here in Galatians 5, and if you just turn your page to Ephesians 1, I want to show you a passage that makes reference to how we actually receive the Spirit of God. Sometimes I think there's confusion about that. If you look at Ephesians 1, it talks about those that are in Ephesus, which is a very wealthy place. The Areopagus and their shops and their stores are actually on a marble road, and so you have a lot of wealth there. It was probably intimidating Timothy because he was the pastor of the church at Ephesus and so much so that he was going to have to correct some of the leadership and he

was having a hard time with that. So, Paul says, “You're going to have to take something for your stomach.” You realize that it's not always easy to do the right thing and it wears on you, but for you not to feel deeply about something would be that you wouldn't care. So, Timothy's having to deal with such things, but one thing that Paul wants everybody to know is that there are far greater riches that God has for you than these monetary things that you go after. So, he begins to talk about the wonderful riches that God has given.

(Ephesians 1:3) “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

(Ephesians 1:4) just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

(He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

(Ephesians 1:6) to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

(Ephesians 1:7) In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace

(Ephesians 1:8) which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight

(Ephesians 1:9) He made known to us the mystery of His will...

(Ephesians 1:11) "...we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will."

He then says in verse 18,

"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

(Ephesians 1:19) and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe..."

He wants them to comprehend the great wealth. The question is, how do you get your eyes opened? As he'll go on to say in Chapter 5, you want to know what the will of

God is? The will of God is for us to be filled with the Spirit. Don't be filled with your debauchery and your desires to self-gratify. It's never going to bring you joy. Be filled with the Spirit. Once again, it's kind of an ambiguous phrase, but we're going to leave it there and then we're going to define how you get the Spirit.

If you look with me here in Ephesians 1:13,

“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth...”

What is that?

Well, he says, “the gospel.” So, the message of truth is the good news of the gospel that Christ came to save you, right? That's good news. That's good news to me.

“... the gospel of your salvation—having also...”

What did you do? You believed it. You heard the message, “God so loved the world that He gave His Son, that if you believe in Him.” Do you believe? I remember praying this prayer with so many people and I would look at them during the prayer. Sometimes we think we have to close our eyes, but I would look at them and I'd say, “Do you

believe this?” And they would say, “I believe.” You know what happens?

Look what the passage says,

“... having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.”

How do I receive the Holy Spirit? You hear the message. You believe those wonderful words of life, and the Spirit of God comes upon you. It's one of the reasons why when we first believe that you can feel the burdens and the chains fall off. You can sense that. So many things that you were worried about and concerned about before now have just seemed to disappear because of the presence of the Spirit of God; because where the Spirit of God is there's liberty. There is a sense of freedom. You've been freed from your sins. You've been freed from all of your guilt. You've been freed from all of those regrets, and you go, “You know what? God loves me and He's going to do wonderful things for me, because if He spared not His own Son, how would He not with Him freely give us all things?” So, God has something wonderful for us and we pray that the eyes of your heart will be enlightened, and

the Spirit of God would begin to reveal to you just how much He loves you. This is the moving of the Spirit of God. He is called the Holy Spirit, which means that there's no spirit like this Spirit specifically that showers you with the grace and truth of God. You can't explain it, but you have this sense of God's favor upon you; the sense of your sins completely forgiven. You now have peace with God. You can't really explain that, but you feel a peace with God to such an extent that you feel very free calling him "Dad." As Romans will say that He's not given us the spirit of fear, but God has given us the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, "Abba! Father!" And there is a sense of truth about the Spirit of God within us that moves us to be real about this and to sense the genuineness of His love. We can sense that. So, we got real with our sins, we got real with our faith and now everything is changed. There's a new song in my heart, right? We become a new creation.

Unfortunately, as time goes, we not only kind of forget that moment, but we stop walking in it. Colossians tells us as you receive Christ Jesus, so walk in Him. But we've

stepped away from it and we got to go back to some of our old way of thinking and we go into the realm of trying to work things out in our own power.

Paul's concern in Galatians 5:4 is,

“You have been severed from Christ...”

He means that if in fact you begin to do things in your own power, you're severing yourself from the real power. You're depriving yourself of the power of God and of the influence of the Spirit of God. If you go to God, “I'm going to handle this myself. I'm just going to buckle down and I'm going to do the right thing. I can do this.” Here's where the misery comes into Christians, “I'm going to be a good Christian if it kills me. I'm going to be a good Christian.” And it probably won't kill you, but it will kill a lot of other people around you and make them miserable. You look at the people that you're now “ministering” to and they don't seem to be free; they seem to be in bondage. You can tell because they go like this every time as you walk by, and that means you're not freeing them. With the Spirit of God there's freedom.

The question is, how do I get back into the Spirit of God? How does the Spirit of God move me? I mean by believing I receive the Spirit of God and oh, I felt His forgiveness and I felt His love, no doubt about that, but how do I walk in the Spirit? That is in Galatians 5:13, if you look with me, (Galatians 5:13) “For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh...”

As we talked about that last week, I just want to reemphasize the fact that it literally means that you can't say, “I'm free now in Christ,” and then start back into the flesh. That's his point. You can't use it as an opportunity to go into the flesh. You say, “I'm free.” Yes, you're free, except you can't go back into the flesh because once you go back into the flesh, you're not free. Once you go back into, “I'm going to do this myself” and thinking in terms of “I'm going to control everything” then you're just putting yourself back in bondage. So, you can start, but you have to start with the Spirit. You cannot start with the flesh.

(Galatians 5:16) “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.”

Wow, it seems so simple, doesn't it? Just walk in the Spirit and you won't carry out the desires of the flesh. I mean in a way, I kind of cringe every time I hear something's too axiomatic or too obvious, because I'm going, “Ok, but how do you do that?”

When he's talking about “walking by the Spirit,” he's actually talking about regulating your life. Usually when he uses the word “walk,” he's talking about the way you regulate your life. Everything you do and all your life should be regulated by the Spirit is basically what he's saying.

“... walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.”

Now, I appreciate the fact that he actually used the phrase “carry out” because “*teleō*” is the word that he uses, which gives us a point of ending. The fact of the matter is that when I'm going through things or I'm working through something, I would like to say that I'm just automatically thinking spiritually, but especially when

I'm working on my car or truck or something like that, I'm not thinking spiritually. I'd like to think I was, but when I throw things or kick things, I'm pretty sure I'm not. It's amazing, you know, you'll unscrew something, and it will fall at a place where it's impossible to find it. I don't know how it does it. The Lord and I have talked a lot about this. I'm sure He's molding me. I'm sometimes not really moldable, but the thinking of "I need to think this way all the time. The Spirit of God needs to be a part of my life in everything that I do." So, I like the way that he says this, so that if I could probably translate this a little bit better, "walk by the spirit so that you won't end up or finish out in the flesh" is actually the way it reads. Because the natural thing to do is to just start off with in flesh and I can just hear the Spirit of God going, "Stop. You don't want to finish out that way, do you?" Because if you finish out in the flesh, you're just going to be very disappointed. Galatians 6 will say you're just going to reap corruption, and I would say misery and hostility and all those other things that come with that. So, it needs to be a part of your life. He's establishing a truth with this verse, but now he goes into some detail and it's the detail that I really

want you to pay attention to because that's what's going to set you free in this. So, it reads this way,

(Galatians 5:17) “For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit...”

Now, we're going to be looking at two words that actually make reference to the things that you want to do, and both these words could probably be defined the same in the respect of something that is a desire. However, they're very different words. The first word that is actually used for desire is a Greek word called “*epithymia*”. The last part of that, “*thymia*,” is probably where we get like the word thermometer or something because it has this connotation of heat and of passion. So, the point is that there are things in our life when it's connected to the flesh, and this is one of the reasons why you don't want flesh to make decisions that rule your life, because it runs off of your senses and you get tired. Then, somebody says something that just irritates you. People do that. They just say something irritating, and you maybe go after them; maybe just another sly word or snarky, peevish or any of

those things, but you come back in a way that's hostile. Now, the point of the matter is that you let your flesh control that conversation because that was your passion; that was the way you were feeling. So, this particular word is sometimes defined as craving or lust, and I think King James will oftentimes translate it "lust," but it's dealing with a feeling or an urge. You know, "Why did you do that?" "Well, I don't know. I feel like it." You know, "Why are you so mad?" Those are urges and that's the flesh. So, Scripture is saying don't let the flesh rule you. More specifically, don't let your urges be the one that calls the shots.

If you look at the passage, it says this,

(Galatians 5:17) "For the flesh sets its desire..."

Its cravings, or you can put in there, it's feelings or it's urges.

"...against the Spirit."

Well, the question is, what is the Spirit? What does He look like?

If you look back in Galatians 5:6,

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.”

That's probably the best definition I can give you of what the Spirit of God moving in your life looks like. It's you trusting God because of your love for Him.

Paul will kind of nail it here in Galatians 2:20, in which he states,

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me...”

Faith working. Here again, the word that is actually used is “*synergeō*” where we get the word “energy”. So, faith energized by love. Why do you believe in God? Why did you put your trust in Him? “Because He loves me.” Stay there, because when you stay there, that's the Spirit of God. “Son, you know I love you.” “Yes, Dad, and I'll do what You tell me to do because I know everything You tell

me to do is because You love me.” That's the Spirit of God. That's the Spirit of God's son that cries out, “Abba! Father!” So, the flesh goes, “I don't feel like it,” or something happens that irritates you, bothers you or moves your feelings or emotions, and it sets its desire against, “You know, I really should be more thoughtful. I really should be more caring.” Why? “Because I love God. I should allow my love for God to supersede my selfish cravings and feelings and urges that I have.” But the two are in opposition. They continue to fight against each other. Here again, one of the reasons why Christians are so miserable is because they still have the urges, you still have the urges. The problem is when you give into the urges, now, you feel guilty. Then, when you feel guilty and you've been walking in the flesh, you try to fix it and then that makes you more miserable and once again, everybody around you.

So, in Galatians 5:17,

“For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another...”

This is a key phrase at the end of the verse,

“... so that you may not do the things that you please.”

Now, this particular word is not “*epithymeō*,” but this particular word is “*thelō*”. Now, the way that these are different is this, the one is dealing with your passions and your cravings and your fleshly desires. You had a bad day or all those things that are just fleshly senses; this has to do with your will, what you want to do; the desires of your heart. Sometimes, obviously, if you have wrong desires, it can move you in the wrong direction. We all have wills, but the bizarre thing is, as powerful as we feel that our wills are our flesh still overpowers it. Here again, if you don't believe that people actually think that their wills are powerful, all you have to do is ask them on New Year's and they're convinced that they're going to change the world on this day. Nevertheless, there's another fact that you want to log in, and that is they never do. The point is that your will is not as strong as your fleshly

cravings. They're not strong enough. It's impossible, and this is why Christians get very frustrated. They get in the realm of, "I'm going to do this." and God goes, "I don't think you can." So, you go and do it and then you don't do it and then you feel guilty and you're literally more miserable than any other unbeliever on the face of the earth.

So, how do I get out of this? Well, what's interesting is that this particular passage is actually very much paralleled to that passage in Romans 7 and 8. It is that parallel that we're going to look at specifically, but the differentiation between these words, I want to clarify even more, and I can probably best show it to you in a very strange place, Matthew 14. If you look there with me. In which I would guess I'm coming from a more worldly negative perspective of this, but just to kind of show you man's will. I think our biggest mistake is that we put too much thought into our own power. "I can do this". That's where we mess up. In Matthew 14, it's a worldly example of Herod, and he has a will to do

something. Now, we would think he's a king. So, as a king, you just basically do whatever you want to do, right? Well, not even politicians do just completely everything they want to do.

(Matthew 14:1) “At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the news about Jesus,

(Matthew 14:2) and said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him.””

He's a little upset about that and scared because he had John put to death.

(Matthew 14:3) “For when Herod had John arrested, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip.

(Matthew 14:4) For John had been saying to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.”

(Matthew 14:5) Although Herod wanted to put him to death...”

Now, “wanted” is “thelō”. He had a resolve. He had a will. It was his will to put John to death. You go, “Well, he did, didn't he?” Eventually, but read this verse,

“Although Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded John as a prophet.”

Now, what this passage is saying is initially he did not. Why? Because he was afraid. This passage just told us that the will was subverted by a fear. We'll put it another way, the will was subverted by the flesh. He had a desire, but he could not fulfill it because his fleshly urge of self-preservation kicked in. You might want to be a hero, but then there's something that goes, “If I do that, that might hurt.” You go, “Ok. I'm not going to do it.” The point is that most of the time your flesh will win. No matter how disciplined you think you are, your flesh will eventually win.

Now, if you go with me a little bit further in Matthew 15, there's an interesting incident here within the text and it says this,

(Matthew 15:21) “Jesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon.”

(Matthew 15:22) And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed.”

(Matthew 15:23) But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, “Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us.”

(Matthew 15:24) But He answered and said, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

(Matthew 15:25) But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, “Lord, help me!”

(Matthew 15:26) And He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”

(Matthew 15:27) But she said, “Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

(Matthew 15:28) Then Jesus said to her, “O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish.” ...”

Scripture is revealing to us is that there is a power that can actually cause our will to win, and that is if we will for the right thing. See one of the problems is that we haven't been willing for the right things. Our will may be to do good things, but to do it in our power. But there is no power to overcome our flesh in willing with our power. But if our will and desire is for the power to come from Him, to admit that He's the Lord and He's the master, now your will, your desire, your wish is going to be granted, and the will becomes more powerful than the flesh. That's living according to the Spirit, because living according to the Spirit is actually winning over the flesh, and there's only one thing that can win over the flesh, and that's for your will to be focused on God controlling. God winning. Put all of your trust in Him just like when you were saved. So, then the Spirit of God begins to move in your life.

Let me show you how this works, in particular, as you can see, the wrestling of Paul in Romans 7. In Roman 7, He begins to describe the Law. The way that the Galatians text ends, he goes, "If you'll walk according to the flesh,

you'll no longer be under the Law.” That word “under” makes reference to the fact of being oppressed or being belittled. One of the reasons why Christians are so miserable is because they feel like failures, and that's what the law does. The law goes, “You're an idiot.” And quite frankly, it's right, but it doesn't let you get up. It just gives one after another after another and you go, “I can't do this” and the Law goes, “You're right. You're a loser.” And that's what the Law does, but if you walk according to the Spirit, you'll no longer have the sense of oppression because you're in a power that can literally supersede the failings of the flesh.

Now, the way it reads here in Romans 7 is and we'll just pick up kind of midway in verse 14,

“For we know that the Law is spiritual...”

His point is, “The Law is not bad, I am.”

“For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.”

See the problem with the flesh is it won't let me do good. The Law says, “You can't do that.” And my flesh goes, “Ok.

He just told you it was something you couldn't do. So, what do you want to do?" I want to do it because he told me not to, and that's what he says. So, my flesh won't let me want to do good. Every time I think of the Law I go, "God's just trying to deprive me of something. I mean, why give me all these rules and regulations?" I like to watch car shows and I watch this one, the guy has a T-shirt, and on the T-shirt, it says, "I know, I know, driver's license and registration." And that's basically the way we think.

So, the flesh is sold into bondage, and it's sold into sin. Let me just say this, not only will my flesh not let me want to do good, but it doesn't allow me to see good in the Law. It causes me to see the Law as that which deprives me of stuff. That's just the way the flesh is.

(Romans 7:15) "For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate."

Now, what he's saying is the flesh is beating the will.

In fact, he'll go on and say this in verse 16,

“But if I do the very thing I do not want (*thelō*) ...”

“Wish.” See, that's willpower. I have willpower.

“But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.”

The law is telling me you can't do it and it's right. I can't do it.

(Romans 7:17) “So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

(Romans 7:18) For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me...”

The desire to do the right thing is in me. I long to do the right thing.

“... but the doing of the good is not.”

(Romans 7:19) For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.”

Once again, in every case we see the word “want,” it is literally the will of man.

(Romans 7:20) “But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

(Romans 7:21) I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.”

How could somebody who wishes to do good do such evil? How could that happen? Yeah, well, in me dwells no good thing, right? Yeah, I mean that's the only thing that all of this is proving. Once again, one of the reasons why Christians fall so short and fail so many times is they're trying to do this in their own power and it's just frustrating them to death because they're going, “I don't expect myself to be this bad. How could I even have that thought?” And I go, “Ok. Give it up.” You're not good. It's impossible for you to be righteous. It's not in your flesh. Your flesh is only bent on cravings. I just want to reiterate; your flesh is more powerful than your willpower. Let me just say this, we just got out of Proverbs, if you don't believe that true, ask Solomon because if there was anybody that had the knowledge and the wisdom and the

discipline of willpower, it would have been Solomon, but could he? No, I mean, it's proof positive that it'd be impossible for this to happen. So, he goes on, and he says, "There's something present in me. There's this battle that's going on and the Law won't let me do good. My flesh won't let me see good in the Law. So, I'm kind of in this bondage, and I'm constantly at war."

In fact, the way that it reads in verse 23,

"But I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law..."

(Romans 7:24) "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free free..."

"I'm deadlocked." I mean, at least the ungodly have as Hebrew 11 says, a passing pleasure of sin. I can't even get a passing pleasure. I mean, I do something wrong, and I feel guilty about it. They do something wrong, and they get a buzz. So, I don't understand the advantage of being a believer because I just feel more miserable. The reason

is, once again, the flesh is always winning, but if you take your will, it's still about the will; take your will and say, "I will to trust in You; not in me. I will to trust in Your righteousness, not in mine." Now, it becomes powerful because now the Spirit of God empowers you. This is where the difference is. Sounds almost like semantics, doesn't it? But you've been wishing for the wrong things. You've been wishing to do good in your strength. It will never happen.

(Romans 8:1) "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

(Romans 8:2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death."

And as he goes on, he begins to explain this. He begins to use this interesting phrase in verse 5 of those who set their minds on certain things. If you set your mind on the things the flesh, then it's not going to go well. Setting your mind on things of the flesh is not just you wanting to do bad things, it's you saying that you're the answer; that

you can do it. So, it's not just bad things, it's you putting your trust in yourself.

(Romans 8:5) “For those who are according to the flesh set their minds...”

Now, fundamentally what he's talking about here is that you're setting your thoughts and seeking and striving for in this context, the things of the flesh. So, if you're saying, “I can do this myself. I could do this in my own strength. I can do this.” He goes, “Not going to work.”

“For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

(Romans 8:6) For the mind set on the flesh...”

“The mind set on the flesh” is basically your will. “This is what I want.” This is why when you come to God, you begin to pray something like this, “God, I want Your will. I want Your power.” When you came to be saved, what did you say? “I'm going to save myself if it kills me”? You didn't say that. You said, “I surrender all. All to Jesus, I

surrender; all to Him I freely give.” And you say, “If I'm going to be saved, it's going to be You that does it because there's no way I can save myself. There's no way I can wash away my sin.” I mean everything about your salvation, you had nothing to do with the change that happened, except you believed, and it was in that believing that the Spirit of God came upon you; in that believing that the Spirit of God will be energized in you. As you believe in the love of God, and that He said, “I'm not going to leave you. I'm not going to forsake you, and I'm going to empower you to do the things, but you're going to have to believe Me to do it.”

So, the way it reads is,

(Romans 8:7) “because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so.”

Once again, “I can handle this. I can do it myself.” You're dealing with a hostile force. It's not going to do it. It's not going to happen, but in verse 14,

“For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

(Romans 8:15) For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!””

When I come with that simplicity of going, “God, You know my feelings. You know who I am.” I mean, look, John says don't say you have no sin; you're just lying to yourself. But you come before God, you say, “I failed, but I know that You're able to strengthen me, and my trust is going to be in You. I know in me dwells no good thing, but I'm going to trust You to do a work in my life, and I can tell you this, Lord, that this is the will of my heart; this is the wish of my heart.” It's not a mistake that the word “prayer” in the New Testament is what is called “*proseuchē*,” which means to pray or to wish upwards, and it's you giving your will upwards to Him and surrendering your will to Him, and that's what prayer is. You're telling God, “I want You to be in control of my life. I trust You above everything else.” And here again, it may

seem like a minor detail, but it was that minor detail that saved your soul. You put all of your trust in Him. That's what's going to be the deal-breaker of the whole thing because once you start doing that, you're going to see the power of God now behind you and you're going to go, "I kicked this thing. I don't even know how I kicked it. I mean, it's like it was easy. It was like I didn't want to do it anymore. It's like I stopped wanting to have those desires. What was that?" That was the Spirit of God doing a work in you that you couldn't do, and you're going to beat that old flesh.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You and we give You thanks for Your power in us. We want to give You thanks for the freedom that You give us that only Your Spirit could give. Father, we come to You in the simplicity of our hearts and our minds, even today, and we say of all the wishes, of all the desires, of all the wills that I have in my being, I will for You to be in control and I will for all of my trust to be in You. I'm taking my hands off these things. I'm going to

stop being a control freak and I'm just going to believe in Your love for me. Faith energized by Your love. What a wonderful thing and what a miraculous power You unleash.