

Galatians 5

Galatians 5:1 –21

Someone shared with me the following illustration. It may have weaknesses embedded in it, but there is a tale that is told in it which may compliment this section of Galatians and is worth considering. A needy individual shared with another that he was having real struggles in his Christian life. His explanation was that in him there were two dogs always fighting and that one was black and the other one was white. His acquaintance asked, “Which one wins the fight”? The answer came back, “The one I feed”!

The struggle between the “old man and the New man” is the struggle from the natural birth to the new, or spiritual birth. In case one would assume that he has struggles that no one else has; be it known that struggles are common to all men until eternity begins. It is not possible to appease the flesh, nor sign a peace treaty. It is not our commitment to the ordinances of one’s faith, which is in focus in this section. It is not what we do, but what has been done for us. As the Galatians started well; they ran into problems in finishing well, **“Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?”** When Spirit led one will not be **“ignorant of his devises,”** or the devices of the flesh. The struggle is well defined for us in verses 17 and 18. Most of us have times of struggle in keeping down the flesh rather than claiming the fullness of God’s Spirit who will live the Christ life through us. Victory is allowing the Victor, Jesus Christ to live His life through us in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Sinful perfection is an illusion. One can be grateful that the book of 1 John was written to believers to direct them through the struggles of sin and its consequences. What shows up is the condition of the heart. It is not for us to suppress the old nature but to have it crucified. Instead of dealing with the fruit we need to deal with the root.

Liberty can become license, which, when entertained will bring bondage. It has been said, “Give sin an inch and it will become the ruler.” The list of sinful practices are devised by Satan, which are the sins of the flesh (v. 19); the sins of witchcraft (v.20); the

sins of personal relations (v. 21); and the sins of a social nature (v. 21). Man made gods with cumbersome rituals will not do; we need the God who made man and will redeem him who agrees with God's diagnosis of his sinful condition. Those who consistently manifest the traits of the flesh are not seen as children of God but of Satan (John 8:44. Painting the pump will not change the water while the Lord can bring about a changed heart that will flow with everlasting water, which will for ever quench a person's thirst.

If you are struggling, stop it and start trusting in the finished work of Christ on the cross. He said, "It is finished!" It is now for the believer to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit (v.16), which will lead him to areas that need to be corrected and sins to be confessed so that Satan will have nothing in you (Romans 8:33,34).

Prayer: Lord, Thank you for salvation, which I have accepted by faith upon confessing my sin. I now surrender all and would have you to live your life through me by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Amen.

Rev. Jerry Vander Veen

We encourage your enquiries and comments at jandrvdv@nbnet.nb.ca