

Father's Expectations— Galatians 5:19–23

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Recently, I have been talking to my friends about our Heavenly Father’s expectations for us—because He is a God of mercy.

On the first day of Unleavened Bread (Thursday, April 9), I gave a Bible study titled “What Are the Father’s Expectations?” The purpose of the presentation was twofold.

- I wanted to remind friends that a God of grace has expectations for His children.
- I wanted to remind friends that the Bible contains many, many examples of the Father’s expectations.

Let’s notice a few of those expectations in Galatians 5:19-23.

Works of the flesh

When the apostle Paul wrote his letter to the brethren in Galatia, he listed some characteristics that he described as “works of the flesh” in Galatians 5:19-21.

These would be characteristics to avoid or to remove from your life. They were as follows.

- Adultery
- Fornication
- Uncleaness
- Lewdness
- Idolatry
- Sorcery
- Hatred
- Contentions
- Jealousies
- Outbursts of wrath
- Selfish ambitions
- Dissensions

- Heresies
- Envy
- Murders
- Drunkenness
- Revelries

Fruit of the Spirit

When the apostle Paul wrote his letter to the brethren in Galatia, he listed some characteristics that he described as “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5:22-23.

These would be characteristics to seek or to maintain in your life. They were as follows.

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Long-suffering
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-control

Walk in the Spirit

Before Paul wrote the two lists in his letter, he mentioned some comments that are now listed as verses 16-17.

Galatians 5:16-17—“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”

After Paul wrote the two lists in his letter, he added some comments that are now listed as verses 24-25.

Galatians 5:24-25—“And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

Personal struggle

In Paul’s letter to the brethren in Rome he described the personal struggle of believers.

Romans 7:15-19—“For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.”