

Because of Christmas, We Have a Helper

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I remember some years ago, a hybrid vehicle, a Toyota, wouldn't start at a Rail Trail parking lot in Railroad, PA. The lady wanted me to jump start it. However, I couldn't figure out how to jump start it because of the hybrid battery set up. While I was trying to figure things out, she was smart enough to look on YouTube and found a video on how to jump start a Toyota hybrid. I followed the directions and it worked. The video was such a big help. Now, we can do searches on Google and find answers to questions, or to get directions to fix things. We have so much at our finger tips now. It's even gotten better with AI. Just type in a question and you'll get an answer in less than a minute. We have so much resources now. I remember when I wanted to start fishing again some years ago. I had forgotten some skills that are needed to be a good fisherman. At that time, we didn't have smart phones, so I bought a book called "Fishing for Dummies". It was a big help and yes I was a dummy during the early days of fishing. We have so much resources now that can help us with about every problem we have. Even in the Christian realm, we rely on books, Google, and other resources. The problem is the Holy Spirit has now become only a passing thought. The Holy Spirit is a gift from Jesus to us. Jesus tells us in John 14: 26, "But when the Father sends the Counselor as my representative – and by the Counselor I mean the Holy Spirit – he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I myself have told you. (NLT, 1657)" The Greek term for Counselor means "advocate, comforter" (Strong's Concordance). Jesus not only came to earth to die for our sins, but Jesus also came so we can enjoy His Spirit. Christmas time is a good time to remember this precious gift from our Lord to us. Let's take a closer look at this.

Let's turn to Galatians 5: 16-26 where we read this, "¹⁶So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever^a you want. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹and

envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.(NIV – Biblegateway)

Now, we see in verse 16, Paul states “walk by” the Spirit. In the KJV, we read “walk in” the Spirit. The Greek term for “walk” is “peripateo” which means walk, follow as companion (Strong’s Concordance). This strong Greek term adds a little strength to the English term “walk”. We usually treat the Holy Spirit like we read about it, but we really don’t believe in what God’s Spirit can do. Paul is telling the Church that they are to follow the Spirit as a “companion”. This is a personal and close relationship with the Spirit. I like the way KJV that uses the translation “walk in” the Spirit. This makes the relationship between us and the Spirit into a real companion relationship. Paul is telling us that if we don’t walk in the Spirit in companionship, we’ll follow the desires of the flesh. It seems like we’ll either follow the desires of our flesh (sin) or follow the Spirit. Paul tells us plainly in verse 18 that we are to be led by the Holy Spirit. We must come to the point where we humble ourselves to where we want to be companion with the Spirit. Plus, we should want to be led by His Spirit. This is being humble. Paul believes in the Holy Spirit and he believes we need to love God with everything we have and that includes loving His Spirit with everything we have. We do this till we get to the point of being a companion with His Spirit and we allow Him to led us. The Church has failed in allowing the Spirit to lead as a companion. We usually lead the way and ask for the help of the Holy Spirit when we get into trouble. Then we wonder why we are under constant conflict with our human nature and the Holy Spirit. When we allow His Spirit free reign in our lives, that conflict becomes less and less because we will grow in faith.

Paul then goes into depth into what happens when we don’t allow ourselves to be lead by the Spirit as a companion. We can’t take these things lightly. In verse 21, Paul tells us that those who allow themselves to be lead by the flesh will not inherit the kingdom of God. Paul also tells us that the acts of the flesh are obvious. Paul gives examples. He starts with sexual immorality, impurity, and

debauchery. Things we see around us all the time. Sexual sin has been one of the most noticeable sins since the world began. Sodom and Gomorrah is a perfect example of what happens when a group of people allow themselves to be led by the flesh – they live in sin or disobedience to God. In Genesis 19: 3, we can read how “all” men, young and old, came to Lot’s house to have sex with the two angels. Look how quickly our own nation was gone down into deepening sin. Since the elections, our nation has not gotten better in the spiritual realm. Sexual sin has become a major problem. We see how our own government doesn’t care about all the children that are sold into sex slavery because of crossing our southern border. We can see how our government doesn’t have a problem with children changing their gender through sick medical procedures. Plus, we see some in the Church following this false teaching. One poll states that 72% of protestants still think it’s morally wrong for an individual to identify with a gender different from the biological sex they were born. The number has been going down. This is not good. We see the term “debauchery” used as well and that means extreme indulgence in bodily pleasures which can include drugs and alcohol. We’ve allowed bad drugs into our medical field and we’re seeing illegal drugs become legal. We’re starting to see total disregard even for pagan societal norms.

We’re starting to see schools allow satan groups come in for school children to join. So, we see an increase in idolatry and witchcraft in our society as well. We see hatred and fits of rage everywhere. I was behind some vehicles that were behind a FedEx truck that had to stop to drop off a package. The problem was we couldn’t go around because the other lane was closed for construction. So, the first vehicle kept blowing the horn at the FedEx truck. The driver of the FedEx truck lost it and yelled out curse words that would make you blush. I was behind a township vehicle that was cleaning up leaves along the gutter last week. I didn’t go around because they were slowly going up a hill, so I couldn’t see if any vehicles were coming from other side. The vehicles behind me got upset and started to drive recklessly up the hill. The township workers started to yell at the vehicles and luckily no vehicles came from other side. After the election, we see that hatred hasn’t gotten any better. Paul saw all these things during his day.

During Paul’s day, nearly all religions and nations involved worship of created beings or objects. Idolatry was the theme of the day. We have the same thing

today. The idolatry of worshipping oneself. The worship of the nation one lives in. The list can go on and on. The idolatry of worshipping oneself we see everywhere in America. This is why we see so much jealousy and selfish ambition today. Maybe social media and our phones have helped many to worship themselves.

Then Paul changes direction and gives us the examples of the fruit of the Spirit. We produce this fruit when we allow His Spirit to become our daily companion. When we make the choice of not wanting to allow ourselves to follow our flesh, we allow the Spirit to produce His fruit through us. He does this because we have become a companion to Him and allowed Him to lead us. When this happens, we produce the opposite of what the flesh produces. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires (verse 24). In other words, we do have a choice to make. If we hunger for the Spirit to lead us and be our companion, He will provide fruit that will make us different from the pagan world we live in. The fruit starts with love. Love covers all fields. Love for our bodies so that we don't want to change our gender. Love for others so we don't want to hurt them by what we say. Love for God so that we don't want to do anything to hurt God and that includes by how we live. Also, love produces faithfulness (verse 22). This is important to remember about faith. We need God's love in us to produce growing faith. The Spirit of God will produce His love in us so that we want to know more about the Lord which helps to grow our faith. Plus, we see from what Paul states that we can also receive peace, kindness, and goodness. His Spirit produces peace, kindness, and goodness in a world where it's hard to find. If we are to be "salt" in a dying world, then this world needs us to allow His Spirit to do His work within us. It's nice to step back for a moment when life seems unbearable and allow His Spirit to calm us with His peace, kindness, and goodness. When we feel and experience this blessing, we will crave for it more and more. Sometimes, when I feel overwhelmed, I'll play a Christian song over and over again till I'm open for that peace and goodness to seep in. We have too many people trying to find peace and goodness in other worldly things.

After Paul states these things, he then reinserts verse 25 that states again how we must "walk in the Spirit". So, Paul mentions this twice in the same chapter. However, in this verse, Paul also adds we must also "live in the Spirit". Not only are we to allow His Spirit to lead us and be companion to Him, we must also "live in the Spirit". Paul now stresses the need for as close of a relationship with Jesus

as humanly possible. Not only do we walk with Him, we must live in the Spirit which requires a surrender from us. It requires us to make that choice. The KJV states "if" in verse 25 – if we live in the Spirit. Do we really want to be a companion with His Spirit? Do we really want Him to lead us? Do we really want Jesus to produce the fruit through His Spirit? At Christmas time, we should reflect on how thankful we should be that this baby, who was God, came to give us life and to allow us to receive the great gift of His Spirit. Pray that the Lord will fill you with His Spirit to overflowing. Then you can experience true peace and goodness on this dying world.

NLT Life Application Study Bible. Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Wheaton, 1996