

Our State of Theology – 9i(3)

The Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:1-26): The Yeast of False Teachers

Galatians 5:1–6 (NIV84)

¹It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

²Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all.

³Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law.

⁴You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

⁵But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope.

⁶For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

- The Judaizers and their disciples did not believe that circumcision would alienate them from Christ.

They saw it as an enhancement, a necessary additive required for the true possession of salvation.

What they advocated was a mingling of the grace of Christ with the merit of works.

Calvin put it so well, “Whoever wants to have a half-Christ loses the whole.”¹

Galatians 5:7-8 (NIV84)

⁷You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?

⁸That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you.

- Our Christian life is compared to that of a race.
- *You were running a race* = τρέχω *trechō* = you were making such fine progress²; to run a certain course of conduct.³
- The Galatian Christians were faithful to the message of the gospel handed to them by the Apostles, when someone *cut in* on them like a runner cutting another one off, causing them to break their stride and impede their progress.

¹ Timothy George, *Galatians*, vol. 30, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 359.

² William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1015.

³ William D. Mounce, *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 1294.

1 Corinthians 9:24–27 (NIV84)

²⁴Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? **Run in such a way as to get the prize.**

²⁵Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

²⁶Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air.

²⁷No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

- In the world, only one person wins the race even though all trained hard and some may have trained even harder than the one who won the race.
- In the Christian “race,” every Christian who carefully trains can win. We do not compete against each other but against the obstacles—practical, physical, and spiritual—that would hinder us.⁴

Hebrews 12:1–3 (NIV84)

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and **let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.**

- This is our calling, the challenging race of a life of faith. Notice what kind of race we run. It is not a short sprint, and we will not finish it with a reckless burst of energy. It is a long-distance race, and **our great virtue is not speed but perseverance.**⁵ (Discussed later date)
- *Marked out* = πρόκειμαι (*prokeimai*) = denoting what is prescribed⁶ (to lay down as a guide, direction, or rule of action : ORDAIN⁷)
- **We each have a specific course mapped out for us, and the course for each runner is unique.** Some are relatively straight, some are all turns, some seem all uphill, some are a flat hiking path. All are long, but some are longer. But the glory is, each of us (no exceptions!) can finish the race “marked out for us.” I may not be able to run your course, and you may find mine impossible, but I can finish my race and you yours. Both of us can finish well if we choose and if

⁴ John F. MacArthur Jr., *1 Corinthians*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 214.

⁵ Richard D. Phillips, *Hebrews*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006), 532.

⁶ Friedrich Büchsel, “Κείμενα Ἀνά- Συνανά- Ἀντί- Ἀπό- Ἐπί- Κατά- Παρά- Περὶ- Πρόκειμαι.” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 656.

⁷ Inc Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 1996).

Acts 20:22–24 (NIV84)

^{22c}And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there.
²³I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.

²⁴However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, **if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me**—the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.

2 Timothy 4:1–8 (NIV84)

¹In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:

²Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.

³For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.

⁴They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

⁵But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

⁶For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure.

⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

⁸Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, **but also to all who have longed for his appearing.**

- May we be able to say the same thing at the end our lives.

- Theodore Roosevelt (26th U.S. President) may have had this verse in mind when he wrote,

- It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly; who errs, and comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; who does actually try to do the deed; who knows the great enthusiasm, the great devotion, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly. Far better is it to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checked by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much because they live in a gray twilight that knows

we rely on him who is our strength and our guide!⁸

- **Ephesians 2:10 (NIV84)**

¹⁰For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do **good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.**

²Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

- The minute the Greek runner in the stadium takes his attention away from the race course and the goal to which he is speeding, and turns it upon the onlooking crowds, his speed is slackened.
- It is so with the Christian. The minute he takes his eyes off of the Lord Jesus, and turns them upon others, his pace in the Christian life is slackened, and his onward progress in grace hindered.⁹
- *How do you fix your eyes on Jesus?* Do you find a picture of Jesus and stare at it? Do you imagine in your mind that He’s there and think about him? No.

Jesus is the Word. The way you fix your eyes on

Jesus is by fixing your eyes on Scripture and do not deviate from its directives concerning you.

- *Author* = ἀρχηγός *archēgos* = is better rendered “forerunner” or “pioneer.” It describes one who goes ahead to blaze the trail and overcome barriers.¹⁰

Christ is the *archegon* (ἀρχηγον), **the chief leader**

of our faith in that He “furnished the perfect development, the supreme example of faith, and in virtue of this He is the leader of the whole believing host of all time.”¹¹

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV84)

¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

¹⁷so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (Eph. 2:10)

- Our life is compared to a race, a life of good works that God has prepared in advance for us to do. We are equipped to do those good works by the Word of God, upon which we have fixed our eyes.

³Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

⁸ R. Kent Hughes, *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul*, vol. 2, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1993), 160.

⁹ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 215.

¹⁰ Richard D. Phillips, *Hebrews*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006), 533.

¹¹ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 215.

neither victory nor defeat. (From speech on the strenuous life, Hamilton Club, Chicago, April 10, 1899)¹²

1 Timothy 6:3–16 (NIV84)

³If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching,

⁴he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions

⁵and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

⁶But godliness with contentment is great gain.

⁷For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.

⁸But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.

⁹People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.

¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

¹¹But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

¹²**Fight the good fight of the faith.** Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

- *Fight* = ἀγωνίζομαι *agōnizomai* = “to contend in the athletic games for the prize, to fight.”

The gloves of the Greek boxer were fur lined on the inside but made on the outside of ox-hide with lead and iron sewed into it; the loser in a wrestling match had his eyes gouged out.

The verb is present tense, imperative mode, commanding a *continuous action*. It showed **the necessity for the continuous nature of the Christian’s warfare against evil, and of his desperate effort to live a life pleasing to God.**¹³

- *Good* = is not *agathos* (ἀγαθος), referring to intrinsic goodness, but *kalos* (καλός), speaking of goodness as seen from the outside by a spectator.

“The desperate, straining, agonizing contest, marked by its beauty of technique.

The phrase, “*marked by its beauty of technique*,” refers to **the beautiful technique** inspired by the Holy Spirit, which he used in gaining victory over sin and in the living of a life pleasing to God.

“Be constantly engaging in the contest marked by its beauty of technique.”¹⁴

Good referred to the way the fight was fought and not that the fight was intrinsically good in itself.

- *The Faith* = πίστις *pistis* = It is not “*faith*” in general as exercised by the Christian, but *to the Faith* as consisting of a body of doctrine with its corresponding ethical responsibilities, namely, Christianity and the Christian life.¹⁵

¹ Ti 6:13 In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you ¹⁴to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

¹⁵which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords,

¹⁶who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

Jude 3 (NIV84)

³Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to **contend for the faith** that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

- *The faith* here is not faith as exercised by the individual, but Christianity itself in its historic doctrines and life-giving salvation.

- “*Earnestly contend*” (κῆρυ) is *epagonizomai* (ἐπαγωνίζομαι), found only here in the New Testament. (*epi* = in addition to; plus) “Agony-plus”

Used of athletes contending in the athletic contests. Speaks of a **vigorous, intense, determined struggle to defeat the opposition**. Our word “*agony*” is the English spelling of the noun form of this word.

The Greek athletes exerted themselves [beyond the] point of agony in an effort to win the contest.

¹² John F. MacArthur Jr., *2 Timothy*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 191–192.

¹³ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 97.

¹⁴ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 97–98.

¹⁵ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 98.

Negative Symbolism

With such intense effort, saints should defend the doctrines of Christianity.¹⁶

Galatians 5:9 (NIV84)

⁹“A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.”

- Used since prehistoric times, leaven included various agents, the most common of which is yeast, causing dough or batter to rise through the process of fermentation.
- Leavened bread was the normal fare for the ancient Israelites (Hos 7:4).

Leaven was omitted for various religious purposes.

During Passover, leavened bread could not be eaten for seven full days (Ex 12:15). Leaven could not be stored within the Israelites' houses (Ex 12:19), or even exist within the entire territory of the nation (Ex. 13:7; Deut. 16:4).

This assured that later generations of Israelites would not forget God's deliverance in their swift exodus from Egypt (Ex. 12:34, 39).

- Some sacrifices outlawed combining many of the sacrifices with leaven (e.g., Ex 34:25; Lev 2:11; 6:17).
- Yet, the *peace offering* included leavened bread (Lev 7:13), and the offering of the *Firstfruits of the Grain Harvest* consisted of two loaves baked with leaven (Lev 23:17).
- There was also positive and negative symbolism present behind the use of yeast.¹⁷

Positive Symbolism

Matthew 13:33 (NIV84)

³³He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

Luke 13:20–21 (NIV84)

²⁰Again he asked, “What shall I compare the kingdom of God to?

²¹It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

- This is a positive image: the kingdom message will gradually permeate the world. Even though it is not obvious and hidden within the dough.

Matthew 16:5–12 (NIV84)

⁵When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread.

⁶“Be careful,” Jesus said to them. “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

⁷They discussed this among themselves and said, “It is because we didn't bring any bread.”

⁸Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, “You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread?

⁹Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered?

¹⁰Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered?

¹¹How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

¹²Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Mark 8:15 (NIV84)

¹⁵“Be careful,” Jesus warned them. “Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod.”

Luke 12:1 (NIV84)

¹Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

1 Corinthians 5:1–8 (NIV84)

¹It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife.

²And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?

³Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present.

⁴When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present,

⁵hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

¹⁶ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, vol. 16 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 235.

¹⁷ Leland Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 498.

*The Fruit of the Spirit Galatians 5:1-26): The Yeast of False Teachers maligns; slander; revile, defame, speak irreverently/impiously/disrespectfully of or about.*¹⁹

Sign of the times in many “churches” today.

⁶Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?⁷Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

⁸Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

- This was not a mandate to eat only unleavened bread, but a mandate to get rid of sin.
- Condoning sin within a church body is like yeast that permeates a batch of flour; that sin will spread, permeating the church body with a destructive effect.
- This was the warning that was given to the Galatian Christians in Galatians 5:9. Allowing the sin of legalism would result in a destructive effect that would permeate the church body.

2 Timothy 2:14–19 (NIV84)

¹⁴Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen.

¹⁵Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

- The Greek meanings in this verse gives the verse new meaning: “Give maximum effort to impart God’s truth clearly and completely as you stand alongside of or before God in order to be approved by Him, a workman who has no cause for shame when his work is being inspected, as we *cut straight*, presenting the truth rightly, not reducing it but treating it honestly and fully, in a straightforward manner.”

² Ti 2:¹⁶Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.

- Words of worldly human opinion are no more than evil chatter, which is destructive heresy that perverts divine truth and will lead to further ungodliness.
- The chatter itself is evil enough, but when it infects the hearers, the evil is compounded.¹⁸
- **2 Peter 2:1-3 (NIV84)**

¹But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.

²Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.

Disrepute = βλασφημέω *blasphēméō* = to speak in a disrespectful way that demeans, denigrates,

¹⁸ John F. MacArthur Jr., *2 Timothy*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 78.

- ³In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

² Ti 2:¹⁷Their teaching will spread like gangrene.

Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,

- Gangrene begins in the body when tissues die from obstructed circulation. Once a limb gets gangrene, it often has to be amputated as the only way to stop the gangrene from spreading.²⁰
- False religion and satanic lies spread faster than the truth, because the sinful human heart is more receptive to them.²¹
- Hymenaeus is also mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:20, where he is included with a man named Alexander. Paul had handed these men over to Satan—put them out of the church. Just as a limb with gangrene must be amputated, these false teachers were “amputated” from the body of believers so they could cause no more harm.²²

² Ti 2:¹⁸who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.

¹⁹Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.”

- God’s sheep listen to God’s voice: His Word. If you confess, “Jesus is Lord,” turn away from wickedness.
- Keep the pure, unadulterated truth of the Gospel in your heart. Fight to keep false teaching from entering your heart and hinder your progress in the race of life.

You recognized the counterfeit, when you focus on the real thing: God’s Word.

- We’ll continue our study in the weeks to come, the Lord willing.

¹⁹ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 178.

²⁰ Bruce B. Barton, David Veerman, and Neil S. Wilson, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1993), 192–193.

²¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., *2 Timothy*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 79.

²² Bruce B. Barton, David Veerman, and Neil S. Wilson, *1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1993), 193.