



Title: "Contrast in Character: A Sermon on Galatians 5"

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Introduction:

Good morning/afternoon/evening, brothers and sisters! Today, let us delve into the powerful message found in the book of Galatians, specifically chapter 5. In this chapter, the Apostle Paul highlights a stark contrast between two types of character and invites us to examine our lives in light of these distinctions. Today, we will explore this contrast and understand how it impacts our Christian journey. So, open your Bibles to Galatians 5, and let's dive into the Word of God.

I. The Contrast in Character (Galatians 5:16-21):

The passage begins with Paul's admonition to "walk by the Spirit" and not gratify the desires of the flesh. Here, we see a clear distinction between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. The works of the flesh are described as evident and destructive, leading to a life of bondage and brokenness. They include sexual immorality, impurity, idolatry, hostility, and more. These are characteristics that are driven by selfishness, pride, and a disregard for God's will.

On the other hand, we have the fruit of the Spirit, which is the product of a life surrendered to the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are qualities that reflect the very nature of God and enable us to live a life that pleases Him.

## II. The Battle Within (Galatians 5:17):

Paul acknowledges that there is an internal struggle within every believer. The flesh and the Spirit are in constant opposition to one another, and this battle can present challenges in our Christian walk. However, as followers of Christ, we have been given the power through the indwelling Holy Spirit to overcome the desires of the flesh and to live according to the Spirit.

## III. Walking in Freedom (Galatians 5:1, 13):

Paul emphasizes that Christ has set us free from the bondage of sin and the law. We are no longer under the burden of trying to earn our salvation through works. Instead, we are called to use our freedom to serve one another in love. When we walk in the Spirit and manifest the fruit of the Spirit, we demonstrate the freedom we have in Christ and become a testimony to the transforming power of God.

## IV. Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23):

The fruit of the Spirit is not something we produce by our own efforts but is the result of a life connected to God. As we seek Him, spend time in His Word, and commune with Him in prayer, the Holy Spirit works within us to produce these qualities. It is through our relationship with Christ that we are transformed from within, and the fruit becomes evident in our words, actions, and relationships.

As we reflect upon this contrast in character, it's important to remember that none of us are perfect. We all fall short and struggle with the desires of the flesh at times. However, the beauty of the Gospel is that God's grace is always available to us. When we stumble, we can turn to Him in repentance and receive His forgiveness.

So, how do we practically apply this message to our lives?

1. Recognize the battle within: Acknowledge that there is an ongoing struggle between the flesh and the Spirit. Be vigilant and aware of the temptations that can lead you astray. Seek the Holy Spirit's guidance and strength to overcome the desires of the flesh.

2. Cultivate a relationship with God: The fruit of the Spirit is produced through a close relationship with God. Spend time in His presence through prayer, worship, and studying His Word. It is in these moments that we are transformed and empowered to live out the character of Christ.

3. Surrender to the Holy Spirit: Allow the Holy Spirit to have full control of your life. Surrender your will, desires, and ambitions to Him. Trust that He knows what is best for you and will guide you in the path of righteousness.

4. Practice the fruit of the Spirit: The fruit of the Spirit is not meant to be theoretical but practical. Let love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control be evident in your relationships, interactions, and daily choices. Be intentional about expressing these qualities in your words and actions.

5. Seek accountability and support: Surround yourself with fellow believers who can encourage and hold you accountable in your journey of character transformation. Engage in a community where you can grow together and spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

In conclusion, the contrast in character presented in Galatians 5 serves as a reminder of the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. As we surrender to Him and allow His fruit to manifest within us, we become living testimonies of God's grace and love. May we continually strive to walk by the Spirit, cultivating a character that reflects the nature of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.