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On this week's Chosen and Cherished Podcast, we talked about what it means to walk in the excellent and profitable works God has called us to. He loves us so much that what He's prepared for us is excellent and profitable. That is so awesome! If you'd like to listen to the episode, just click on the link... <https://summitpoint.org/chosen-and-cherished/>

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Galatians 5:16-26 ~

Titus 3:8 says, "The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people." This is what's excellent and profitable...

- *Putting all my faith in God*
- *Devoting myself to the works that God calls good... the works that Ephesians 2:10 says He has prepared for me to do, so that I will walk in them.*

Galatians 5:16-26 gives me a better understanding of HOW to walk in the good, profitable, excellent works of God.

Vs. 16-18 ~ "But I say..." Okay. Before I can go on to what Paul is gonna say, I see that he said, "but", meaning that this in opposition to something he just said. What? Galatians 5:1 says, "For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." BUT... don't go back to being tied to the voluntary slavery of sin that you were set free from. And Galatians 5:13-15 says, "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another." BUT... don't use your freedom to feed your flesh and bite and devour others. Your freedom gives you the

opportunity to love others rather than using them to make yourself feel loved. You are already fully loved by the Lord.

How do I live in that freedom, especially when it seems more satisfying on the surface for ME to be the center of my world? "WALK BY THE SPIRIT, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." What's wrong with gratifying the desires of my flesh? "The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other." Gratifying the desires of the flesh, in reality, "keep me from doing the things I want to do." I WANT to be close to God and to please Him. My flesh that I'm stuck with until heaven is hostile to God (Romans 8:7). It is impossible to walk according to my selfish desires AND to walk according to what pleases God. What pleases God is excellent and profitable. What pleases my flesh is detestable and worthless... no matter how hard I try to spin it in my mind or to other people. If what I desire doesn't align with what pleases God, it will not go well for me. Why? Because "EVERY good gift and EVERY perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). If it's from God, it's good and perfect. If it's not from God, it's detestable and worthless. My flesh does not believe that. And that's why I can't listen to my flesh.

The Galatian believers were being encouraged NOT to live by the Spirit to overcome the flesh, but to live by the law. Living by the law to overcome sin does not work. Romans 7:5-6 says, "For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code." The law only makes us want to sin and live for the passions of our flesh MORE! God says it is in the new way of the Spirit that we overcome the passions of our flesh, because He has the power to help us. We are too weak to do it in our strength. So... as we WALK by the Spirit and are LED by the Spirit, "we are not under the law" that stirs our flesh to pursue more sin.

Vs. 19-21 ~ In case I'm not sure what the works of the flesh, stirred up by the law are, God gives me a list. This list isn't even exhaustive! I think I have no clue just how much I continue to sin against the Lord in my daily life. If I truly get that, I will realize that I absolutely MUST walk by the Spirit and be led by the Spirit. AND I will also live in absolute gratitude that God's grace and mercy continue to sustain me every day in His faithfulness and patient endurance.

I'm just gonna pick out the works of the flesh that I know my flesh tries to lure me to in my life RIGHT NOW. Currently, in my life, I am drawn to idolatry... putting other things like body image and wanting honor from other people as higher priority than God. I am drawn to enmity (hostility) when I don't get my way. I am drawn to strife (contention) when I think I'm right and I should be valued more. I am drawn to jealousy and rivalries when I think the honor should be mine above others. I am still in the process of learning to release fits of anger when I feel stepped on, as though this were MY kingdom. I am tempted to give in to dissensions, divisions, and envy... seeking to avoid those who I feel think they're better than me. And these are just

the works of the flesh I'm AWARE of!!! At the core of all these works of the flesh is PRIDE.

All these things are what God has saved me from. Why would I go back to them? I was not saved so that I could continue in the evil I was set free from. That is voluntary slavery. Those who WALK in these things rather than WALK in the Spirit will not inherit the kingdom of God.

This can be confusing. I just said I still struggle with these things. Does that mean I'm not saved? No. 1 John tells me that if I think I'm without sin, I'm deceiving myself. 1 John 2:1-2 tells me that Jesus is my advocate before the Father as my replacement payment for that sin. Colossians 2:13-14 tells me that Jesus nailed the debt of my sin to the cross. So what does it mean? It means genuine faith is proven in actions. I can't make sin my practice AND confess Jesus as Lord. Those who claim faith in word only while they also make sin their PRACTICE will not inherit the kingdom of God. 1 John 3:4-6 says, "Everyone who makes a PRACTICE of sinning also PRACTICES lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that He (Jesus) appeared in order to take away sins, and IN HIM there is no sin. No one who abides in Him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen Him or known Him." Lord, please help me to grasp that nothing good comes from walking in the works of the flesh.

Vs. 22-23 ~ What does it look like when I'm walking in the Spirit and being led by the Spirit? The Spirit grows His fruit in me. Two things are really important about this statement. 1. This not about MY works. They are HIS fruit grown IN me. 2. This is a list of many attributes or flavors, but one fruit. If I'm truly led by the Spirit and walking in Him, there will be evidence of all these attributes growing in me more and more. I can't just pick and choose which attributes I want to "work on." I submit myself to the Spirit, walk in Him, follow Him... and He grows all the flavors of this miraculous, supernatural fruit in me.

He grows...

- *Genuine, sacrificial love*
- *Joy... John 15 says He fills me with this abundant joy as I abide in Him, let His word abide in me, and abide in His love through obedience to Him*
- *Peace... because He is the God of peace. This is not about being silent, but being content... IN HIM, not in my circumstances*
- *Patience... being able to endure with unwavering faith when the brokenness of this world washes on my shore*
- *Kindness... meeting needs of others*
- *Goodness... intrinsically good from the inside out.*
- *Faithfulness... letting my faith IN God be shown by my faith TO God*
- *Gentleness... humble, gentle strength*

- *Self-control... which is really SPIRIT control. The fruit of letting the Spirit be what controls me rather than my feelings, emotions, or selfish desires.*

There is no law against any one of these flavors of the fruit the Spirit grows in us.

Vs. 24-26 ~ "And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." Okay... if I belong to Jesus and my flesh is crucified with its passions and desires, why am I prone to gratify the desires of my dead flesh??? Why do I have to be warned not to "become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another"? The truth is, my sins HAVE been nailed to the cross. I HAVE been crucified with Christ. But like the body of a snake with its head cut off doesn't stop writhing and slithering for a long time after it's dead, so my old flesh continues to write and slither until Jesus takes me home. I do belong to Christ. My sins HAVE been nailed to the cross. The rest of my time on earth needs to be focused on walking by the Spirit and not walking in my crucified flesh.

There is only one way to make this happen... "If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit." This takes humility and surrender. I need to humbly walk by the Spirit and crush the flesh. I need to follow the Spirit wherever He leads. I need to put to death the works of the flesh in me that wage war against my soul. I need to keep in step with the Spirit. I can't do that if I'm walking in the steps of the flesh. The flesh and the Spirit are heading opposite directions.

How will I know that I'm keeping in step with the Spirit? The genuineness of my relationship with God will always be proven by my genuineness in relationships with others. So... In my relationships with others, I will "not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another." I will not let pride rule my heart, causing me to compare myself with others. When I compare myself with others, I will either provoke them because I treat them as though I'm superior to them, or I will envy them and resent them for being in a position that is superior to me. When I keep in step with the Spirit, His fruit grows in me, and I no longer need to compare myself with others. Instead, I am free to love them and serve them. My relationship with God will always impact my relationships with others.

The command here is clear: Walk by the Spirit. Follow the Spirit. Keep in step with the Spirit. I was saved for this, that I might live by the Spirit and be filled by the Spirit until the day Jesus takes me home. Salvation is so much more than a "get out of jail free" card. God saved me for way more than that.

I've been compiling a list of scriptures that help me understand what I was saved FROM, and what I'm saved TO. Here's a list of the scriptures I've compiled so far... I pray that the Lord will help me to cooperate with Him as He does this work in me ~

- *"But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God." ~ Acts 20:24 ESV*

- *"We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." ~ Romans 6:4 ESV*
- *"For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace." ~ Romans 6:10-14 ESV*
- *"I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification." ~ Romans 6:19 ESV*
- *"Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God." ~ Romans 7:4 ESV*
- *"For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised." ~ 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 ESV*
- *"For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." ~ Galatians 2:19-20 ESV*
- *"For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another." ~ Galatians 5:13-15 ESV*
- *"And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy." ~ Colossians 1:9-11 ESV*
- *"Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God." ~ 1 Peter 2:16 ESV*
- *"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed." ~ 1 Peter 2:24 ESV*
- *"Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God." ~ 1 Peter 4:1-2 ESV*

- *"Whoever says 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked." ~ 1 John 2:4-6 ESV*
- *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever." ~ 1 John 2:15-17 ESV*

This is my prayer ~ "Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." ~ Philippians 3:12-14

This is my hope ~ "I am confident that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." ~ Philippians 1:6

AMEN