



WOW: Word Of the Week

LAXITY

May 10, 2023

The path to this week's WOW is a bit circuitous. Let me explain. My first goal was to write another WOW focused on the Holy Spirit. That took me to Galatians 5, "live by the Spirit and you will not be tempted to go after the longings of this world." I have question. How should we understand that claim? I just finished posting a study of Romans 8 – on YouTube and on Facebook.

From Gal. 5 to Romans 8. Is it true Christians have power over sin by the Spirit? Living by the life-giving Spirit, empowered to put to death worldly activities, verified as God's children by holy lives. This sounds almost too good to be true!

Then I remember a paraphrase of Galatians 5: walk by the Holy Spirit; do not make a mess of your life. For a short time, I thought that "mess" would be this week's WOW. Quit making messes. If your life is characterized by messes, stop it!

I looked for definitions of the word mess: *a disordered, untidy, offensive, or unpleasant state or condition*. Christians with disordered, untidy lives? Perhaps true at times. Christians who are offensive and unpleasant! May it never be!

The definition continued: *that which is disordered, untidy, offensive, or unpleasant because of blundering, laxity, or misconduct*. Aha! The Christian life, at least as we grow up and mature in Christ, is certainly not intended to be a life of blunders, misconduct, or laxity.

Now what? Oh, yes. Time for another definition. Laxity: to be lax, slack, remiss; a type of neglect, negligence, neglecting responsibilities, lacking concern.

Half of my time. More than you wanted to know about the development of these weekly WOW thoughts. Laxity.

What shall we say? Paul again, this time in Romans 6. May it never be! That Christians living in step with God's Holy Spirit would fail to pay attention, be neglectful? Heb. 2:4, let us not neglect a salvation so great as what we have received! That Christians would neglect the spiritual life? Let other priorities sneak in? Choose things of less importance? Exhibit lack of concern?

Not much needs to be said. Accidental missteps—yes. Living in a mess, disordered lives, from one blunder to the next. Misconduct makes messes.

A short word: six letters. LAXITY. Something to avoid. Living by the Spirit, empowered over sin, avoiding messes. How?

I end on a positive note. Here are eight antonyms of laxity: alertness, attention, attentiveness, caution, care, carefulness, vigilance, watchfulness. This week, these are my watchwords. Life in the Spirit, ignoring the world, letting God's Spirit-power and saving-power straighten up any messes, paying close attention. Hebrews 2 again: Let us give extremely earnest heed. Old language, never out of date.