

# WALK IN THE SPIRIT #2

Galatians 5:13-26

Key Truth

If we walk in the Spirit, He will fill our church with His fruit.

I almost blew Grace Church up in 1992.

Keep in mind Grace suffered three splits during the mid to late 80's.

On staff less than a year, I made the executive decision to completely rearrange the stage without consulting anyone. This effectively displaced the choir. Honestly, I do not remember what prompted such a rash decision. I do remember thinking, "You're in charge of Sunday service so you have the authority to do this."

A few nights later I woke up in the middle of the night with a deep sense of guilt and remorse. What came clear to me was that I had completely disrespected the authority of the choir director and fellow Elder, Glae McDonald and I had disrespected and devalued the brothers and sisters in the choir. The next morning I rushed to Glae's home, apologized and sought his forgiveness which he graciously granted and then I reset the stage.

I almost blew Grace Church up again in 1996.

I am passionate about the development and functioning of the Elders. It was a touchy subject because the last church split had been over Eldership. At a business meeting in 1996 I proposed major changes to our eldership. Two elders spoke against my proposal. They were gracious and respectful, but opposed. I was frustrated. We agreed to give it a week and meet again the next Sunday.

During that week two thoughts came clear: 1) the two brothers who spoke in opposition were not only Elders, but spiritual fathers of the Grace family. If they were not at peace, pushing forward would likely divide the family. 2) I realized that I had not done nearly enough to teach the Elders and church family what the Bible teaches about shepherd eldership. It was understandable they were opposed.

Having gained clarity, I withdrew my proposal at the followup meeting. Four years later the Elders embarked on a year long study of eldership and then taught the church family. In 2000 our present eldership policy was proposed and approved with but one dissenting vote.

The hero of these stories is the Holy Spirit. He brought clarity of mind. By yielding to Him we experienced His fruit of peace and unity.

This is the message of Galatians 5:13-26: the more we walk in the Spirit the more He fills our church with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Galatians 5:13-26 (ESV)

<sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." <sup>15</sup> But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

<sup>16</sup> But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. <sup>17</sup> For 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, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. <sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. <sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, <sup>21</sup> envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

<sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. <sup>26</sup> Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Love, joy, peace are part of our inheritance as children of God. He wants us to experience love, joy, peace in abundance in both our individual and corporate life in the church family. Walking in the Spirit makes it possible so let's think about what it looks like to walk in the Spirit.

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS WITH ME EVERY MOMENT OF EVERY DAY**

Because He's referred to as the *Spirit* we may not have an accurate picture of who He is. The Holy Spirit is the third person of our triune God – God the Father, Jesus the Son, the Holy Spirit. Like the Father and Son, the Spirit is a person Who thinks, speaks, acts and feels.

The moment you placed faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus for salvation the Holy Spirit came to live in you (Romans 8:9; Galatians 4:6). This miracle is called the *indwelling of the Spirit*. Every moment of every day the Holy Spirit lives in and with you; He does not come and go (this is a major difference between the Spirit's relationship to New Covenant believers and believers during the Old Testament period). When you rise in the morning and get ready for the day, the Spirit is with you. When you're taking your math test He is with you. When you're driving home from work He is with you. When you're scrolling through Facebook or texting or watching the news or eating dinner He is with you.

The Holy Spirit is with you every moment of every day and His primary goal is to renew your mind.

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS HELPING ME THINK ABOUT LIFE THE WAY JESUS THINKS ABOUT LIFE**

The Holy Spirit is constantly communicating with us whether it be convicting of sin or prompting us to serve someone or warning us away from something. Of His many ministries to us, one of His primary is *illumination*. *Illumination* is the Spirit enabling us to understand God's thoughts and His plans as revealed in the Bible.

<sup>1</sup> Corinthians 2:6–13 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup> Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. <sup>7</sup> But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. <sup>8</sup> None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. <sup>9</sup> But, as it is written,

“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined,  
what God has prepared for those who love him”—

<sup>10</sup> these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup> For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup> Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. <sup>13</sup> And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

Many can testify to the miraculous change that occurs after salvation: the Bible becomes understandable! The indwelling Spirit enables us to understand the mind and plan of God. He does so, not to satisfy our curiosity but to transform our character. Transforming my thoughts will eventually transform my character.

Remember the saying?

Sow a thought, reap an action  
Sow an action, reap a habit  
Sow a habit, reap a character  
Sow a character, reap a destiny

There is so much God wants to share with us. And what a blessing when we learn the truth and get free from the lies of this world and our own thinking. For instance, think of the difference it makes knowing that God uses the trials of this life to make us more like Jesus?

James 1:2–4 (ESV)

<sup>2</sup> Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, <sup>3</sup> for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. <sup>4</sup> And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

John and Jen Doyle were in town this week. John's been in and out of work for two years. When he was first laid off, he chose to count it all joy and to trust God through the trial of his unemployment. Though it was hard, John would stand before us and declare that it has been an amazing time of growth and that they have seen God meet their needs time and time again.

This radical change in perspective came about by John's study of God's Word and his choosing to walk by the Spirit. If John did not know that God uses trials he would not be able to choose to count it all joy. Knowing God's Word is absolutely necessary to walking in the Spirit.

### **THE MORE OF GOD'S WORD I TAKE IN THE MORE RENEWING AND GUIDING THE SPIRIT CAN DO**

Think of the truth in the Bible as the "raw material" the Spirit uses to help us think about life the way Jesus thinks about life. Every person who has made real progress in becoming like Jesus is a person who saturates their mind with Scripture; they *let the Word of Christ dwell in them richly*. Those brothers or sisters that you look up to in the Lord are all first and foremost students of God's Word.

Colossians 3:12-17 and Ephesians 5:15-21 reveal this correlation between the Word and walking in the Spirit.

Colossians 3:12-17 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup> And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Notice the command in verse 16 is to *let the word of Christ dwell in you richly*. Keep your finger in Colossians and turn to the parallel passage of Ephesians 5:15-21.

Ephesians 5:15-21 (ESV)

<sup>15</sup> Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup> And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, <sup>20</sup> giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>21</sup> submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

What is produced by the filling of the Spirit in Ephesians is produced by the word of Christ in Colossians. The two are intertwined.

Ephesians 5:25-33 commands husbands to sacrificially love their wives as Jesus sacrificially loves the Church and gave His life for her. Further, the passage commands husbands to nourish and cherish their wives. And finally, the passage commands husbands to cleave to their wives in the one flesh union. This was a radically different understanding of marriage in the first century and it is a radically different understanding in the 21st century. As a Christian husband meditates upon this passage, the Holy Spirit takes what the man is learning and helps him put it into practice. The Holy Spirit convicts him that if he is going to love his wife, he needs to spend more time with her. When he's about to flirt with another woman, the Holy Spirit brings this passage to mind. If he yields to the Spirit he is walking in the Spirit and will experience the blessing of making a right choice. As he continues to turn this passage over in his mind, the Spirit continues to show him ways to express love for his wife and to nourish her not only physically, but spiritually.

The Spirit uses the Word to help a Christian husband think about marriage the way Jesus thinks about marriage. The husband's responsibilities are to *let the Word of Christ dwell in him richly* and *to be filled with the Spirit* which means to come under the Spirit's influence. We come under the Spirit's influence as we yield to His voice and do what He directs us to do. This is another way of describing *walking in the Spirit*.

There is much more to discover about walking in the Spirit. In this study we learned that...

**... the Holy Spirit is with me every moment of every day**

**... the Holy Spirit is helping me think about life the way Jesus thinks about life**

**... the more of God's word I take in the more renewing and guiding the Spirit can do**

Let us be thankful for the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Let us walk in the Spirit knowing that He will fill our lives and our church with His fruit!