

PARTNERS IN PRAYER- “God We Exalt You!”

February 20th, 2022 Walking in the Holy Spirit

Dear Prayer Team,

*“So I say, **walk by the Spirit**, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”*

Galatians 5:16 (NIV)

*“Since we live by the Spirit, let us **keep in step with the Spirit!**”*

Galatians 5:25 (NIV)



How are you at taking walks on these cold winter days? I know that in wintertime, we don't often think about our gardens, but when I am walking outside in the cold and ice, I can't stop my mind from wondering, “What will my garden be like come spring?” I start to dream and plan for what I will grow. I think of the types of seeds to buy. I think of the fruits and veggies I want to reap from my garden. And along with this, I think about what grows in our garden without any help. Weeds, right?! All this to say, that if we are not choosing to walk and be filled with the Spirit, what will grow out of our hearts automatically? Spiritual weeds. How do we grow fruits of the Spirit out of our lives? What is the process of “sanctification” about? For that matter, what is “walking” in the Spirit of God?

Our time in God's Word should help us understand what walking in the Spirit is about and trust me, it isn't a walk in the park, or a simple stroll through the garden. We need to remember that like walking in winter conditions, through snow and ice, we will have hardships to constantly look out for if we are to “walk with the Spirit!” I want to just get our hearts focused on “what walking in the Holy Spirit is all about” and I have put together four questions which I hope will help get us started in the right direction.

1. When it comes to walking in the Spirit, what am I getting myself into?

When it comes to understanding the Holy Spirit and what it means to walk with and in the Spirit of God daily, some people—even spiritual leaders and pastors—get a little bit nervous. They'll say, "I'm afraid to open myself up to the gifts of the Spirit, because I just don't know what might happen. If I open myself up to that, I might start talking weird. What if I'm in a bank and all of a sudden I start speaking in funny languages or something?" People worry that they're going to unexpectedly lose control. Remember we learned that being filled with the Spirit is not about losing control? It's about letting Him control you more and more. What is important is if we are determining to walk with the Spirit of God we need to be ready. You see, every day we face an “uncivil civil internal war.”

Galatians 5:17 says: “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish” (NKJV). What it is saying is that this fleshly sin-loving part of us, that didn’t go away at our salvation, will constantly fight inside of us with the Spirit of God. I love how the New Living Translation puts it: “For we naturally love to do evil things that are just the opposite from the things that the Holy Spirit tells us to do; and the good things we want to do when the Spirit has His way with us are just the opposite of our natural desires. These two forces within us are constantly fighting each other to win control over us, and our wishes are never free from their pressures. When you are guided by the Holy Spirit, you need no longer force yourself to obey.” The Spirit helps us in this daily spiritual fight. While the battle raging within us is fierce, Satan has certainly met his match in the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit makes a difference in the life of the believer. The unsaved person does not have the Spirit residing in him and therefore cannot live a victorious life over sin and Satan.

The all-powerful Spirit of God can set us free from the tyranny of fleshly ways within us. Through this sanctifying power of the Spirit of God, it is possible for us to win over the power of the flesh. When the Spirit of God sanctifies us He does not eradicate the flesh within us; He does not destroy the principle within us that constantly bends us toward sin. But the Spirit provides the changing power of God to live above the evil influences of the flesh. He allows us to nail our old habits and actions to the cross, so we experience transformation. This doesn’t automatically happen, but we must ask and pray for the Spirit’s walk and filling for it to occur in us.

When the theologian and preacher Dr. A. B. Simpson tells us that we are to exchange our old lives for the new life in Jesus, it is the indwelling of the Spirit that gives us what is the “exchanged” life, and that the walk with the Spirit is not the “exhausted” life. He wrote this in his poem entitled *Himself*,

Once it was the blessing, now it is the Lord;
Once it was the feeling, now it is His Word;
Once His gifts I wanted, now the Giver own;
Once I sought for healing, now Himself alone.

Once ‘twas painful trying, now ‘tis perfect trust;
Once a half salvation, now the uttermost;
Once ‘twas ceaseless holding, now He holds me fast;
Once ‘twas constant driving, now my anchor’s cast.

Once ‘twas busy planning, now ‘tis trustful prayer;
Once ‘twas anxious caring, now He has the care;
Once ‘twas what I wanted, now what Jesus says;



Once 'twas constant asking, now 'tis ceaseless praise.

Once it was my working, His it hence shall be;
Once I tried to use Him, now He uses me;
Once the power I wanted, now the Mighty One;
Once for self I labored, now for Him alone!" (They Found the Secret, pg. 13-14)

2. How do I keep in step with walking in the Spirit?

Walking in the Spirit is the "sanctification" process that the Spirit of God uses to keep us obedient and growing in Christ. It's the change from inside to outside. It's what makes us like Jesus. Sanctification means the process from which we are to be set apart unto God from a life of habitual sin. It does not mean we never sin, nor does it mean we have the ability to completely eradicate sin, but to be sanctified means that once we are saved, we have a new position, and power from the Holy Spirit to transform us from our old selves into Jesus.

When I was in marching band in my junior high years, we had what was called band camp every year before the marching season began. That would be a time where we would just practice marching in lines. We did that so we would get used to stepping in sync that we would not have to think about it anymore. We caught the habit of marching in step because we repeated and repeated the action. And if we found ourselves out of step, we would learn to half hop, back into step. That is what Paul is reminding us believers to do in Galatians 5. Paul said it three times "If we live in the Spirit of God, let us all walk in the Spirit of God!" (16, 18, 25)

Just as walking is a series of steps, we need to walk in small obedient choices with the Spirit of God. Incidentally, walking and filling of the Spirit do go hand-in-hand. I really can't say it enough: we should never be afraid of the Holy Spirit when He is transforming and helping us grow. We should never be afraid of anything God wants to give us or do in our lives. If it's from the Lord, receive it, enjoy it, and work with it. Everyone who makes the decision to turn from his sin and follow Jesus is baptized by one Spirit into one body the moment he makes that decision (see 1 Corinthians 12:13). But I contend we should also be filled with the Spirit over and over in our daily choices, like taking walking steps every day. Now-a-days people wear watches and counters to measure and keep track of their steps. We should be using those moments of filling in the Spirit as walking in the Spirit steps. That leads to greater freedom in Christ. That also brings assurances. D.L. Moody said, *"I believe firmly that the moment our hearts are emptied of pride and selfishness and ambition and everything that is contrary to God's law, the Holy Spirit will fill every corner of our hearts. But if we are full of pride and conceit and ambition and the world, there is no room for the Spirit of God. We must be emptied before we can be filled."* (J. Kuhatschek, *Taking The Guesswork Out of Applying The Bible*, IVP, p. 153ff.)

3. Why is walking in the Spirit and His filling so important? What is God's great aim in all of this? To make us into "Jesus!" You see, the Holy Spirit first comes after us to save us. He then comes inside us to sanctify us. He also comes upon us to empower us. Why? Because He has something He wants us to do, a task He wants us to perform. Jesus said, "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart [or innermost being] will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). That outflowing is key. It's the whole reason we are filled with the Spirit: to be a channel through which the Holy Spirit flows into us and then out from us to others. The Holy Spirit's greatest agenda is to make us like Jesus! It is God's will to make you like His Son! It's repeated over and over in Scripture! Here are a few:

- ✓ 2 Corinthians 3:17-18- "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His [Jesus'] image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."
- ✓ Romans 8:28-29- "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified."
- ✓ James 1:2-4- "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."
- ✓ 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil. May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The One who calls you is faithful, and He will do it."
- ✓ Ephesians 4:12-14- "So Christ Himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

More than any activity or happiness or purpose you have wished or wanted, the priority and the main goal of the Holy Spirit under the Father's will is to

make you like His Son! That is the whole purpose of walking and being filled by the Spirit.

I love the way the Holy Spirit does this in our lives and how J. I. Packer illustrated this working of the Spirit as it points us to Jesus:

“The Holy Spirit's distinctive role is to fulfill what we may call a floodlight ministry in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. So far as this role was concerned, the Spirit ‘was not yet’ (John 7:29, literal Greek) while Jesus was on earth; only when the Father had glorified him (John 17:1, 5) could the Spirit's work of making men aware of Jesus' glory begin.

I remember walking to church [Dr. Packer continues personally] one winter evening to preach on the words, ‘He will glorify me’ (John 16:14), seeing the building floodlit as I turned a corner, and realizing that this was exactly the illustration my message needed. When floodlighting is well done, the floodlights are placed so that you do not see them; in fact, you are not supposed to see where the light is coming from; what you are meant to see is just the building on which the floodlights are trained. The intended effect is to make it visible when otherwise it would not be seen for the darkness, and to maximize its dignity by throwing all its details into relief so that you can see it properly. This perfectly illustrated the Spirit's new covenant role. He is, so to speak, the hidden floodlight shining on the Savior.

Or think of it this way. It is as if the Spirit stands behind us, throwing light over our shoulder on to Jesus who stands facing us. The Spirit's message to us is never, “Look at me; listen to me; come to me; get to know me”, but always, ‘Look at Him, and see His glory; listen to Him and hear His word; go to Him and have life; get to know Him and taste His gift of joy and peace.’ The Spirit, we might say, is the matchmaker, the celestial marriage broker, whose role it is to bring us and Christ together and ensure that we stay together” (James Packer, *Your Father Loves You*, Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986).

4. What is the result of walking with the Spirit and being filled by Him?

And because God gives abundantly, being filled with the Spirit is not a one-time thing. The Bible records that the early church was filled and then filled again. In fact, Ephesians 5 commands us, “Allow yourself to be filled with the Holy Spirit” (v. 18). In other words, be constantly filled with the Holy Spirit. Be filled and re-filled. Give control over to Him.

So how do we become filled with the Spirit and keep in step as we walk with the Spirit? Let me remind you from our past two messages: “You just ask Him.” You pray! Jesus said, “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him” (Luke 11:13). I ask God to fill me with His Spirit every single day. I ask Him that every time I get up to teach. Why? Because we tend to leak if we don't ask for that re-filling. Our leg muscles will atrophy if we don't keep up the steps. So don't be afraid to ask God to fill you with the Spirit and keep in step with Him. And don't be afraid to ask again. Then the

fruit of the Spirit begins to bud inside us and the Spirit of God works that fruit out in our lives. Gal. 5:22-23 is really about how the Spirit of God brings “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control” of Jesus into our lives in a measurable way so people can see the fruit of Jesus in us. I want to just remind you that Jesus chose us to bear fruit (John 15:16). Bearing fruit isn’t just for some believers and not others. The fruit of the Spirit is how the Holy Spirit works “Christ-likeness” into our lives. So people can see the transformation of Jesus clearly and tangibly from our outward lives.

Every now and then we come across a life that is radiant, revealing richness and warmth; a triumph that intrigues and challenges us. And in my learning about the old Preacher, John Bunyan, I learned how hard it was for him to come to an understanding of what a “walk in the Spirit” was all about. But to encourage us, he wrote it into an easy-to-read novel we all know to be *Pilgrim’s Progress*. His wonderful story reflects the hard and often difficult testimony of life he himself had. He wanted to paint a vivid and easy-to-understand picture of what the journey of the Christian life was like. One of the wonderful promises is that the sanctified walk with the Spirit does have an ending and it is encouraging. In his closing story of *Pilgrim’s Progress*, Bunyan gives us great insight that illustrates how the Holy Spirit brings us home. Bunyan was in Bedford’s prison when he wrote this. Here is Christian and Hopeful’s entrance into the city of the Great King, and it is regarded as one of the finest pieces of writing in the English language as well as a magnificent presentation of Scriptural truth of what awaits us as believers when we walk with the Spirit and adventure into glory.

“Now, upon the bank of the river, on the other side, Christian and Hopeful saw two shining men again, who there waited for them. Wherefore, being come out of the river, they saluted them saying, ‘We are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those that shall be heirs of salvation.’ Thus, they went along towards the gate.”

“Now you must note, that the city stood upon a mighty hill; but the pilgrims went up that hill with ease, because they had these two men to lead them up by the arms; they had like-wise left their mortal garments behind them in the river; for though they went in with them, they came out without them. They therefore went up there with much agility and speed, though the foundation upon which the city was framed was higher than the clouds; they therefore went up through the region of the air, sweetly talking as they went, being comforted because they safely got over the river, and had such glorious companions to attend them.”

“The talk that they had with the shining ones was about the glory of the place; who told them that the beauty and glory of it was inexpressible. There, said they, is Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect... The men then asked, ‘What must we do in the holy place?’ To whom it was answered, ‘You must there receive the comfort of all your toil, and have joy for all your sorrow; you must reap what you have sown even the fruit of all your prayers, and

tears, and sufferings for the King by the way. In that place you must wear crowns of gold, and enjoy the perpetual sign and vision of the Holy One; for 'there you shall see Him as He is.' There also you shall serve Him continually with praise, with shouting and thanksgiving, whom you desire to serve in the world, though with much difficulty, because of the infirmity of your flesh. There your eyes shall be delighted with seeing, and your ears with hearing the pleasant voice of the Mighty One. There you shall enjoy your friends again that are gone thither before you; and there you shall with joy revive even everyone that follows into the holy place after you..."

"Now, while they were thus drawing towards the gate, beyond a company of the heavenly host came out to meet them: to whom it was said by the other two shining ones, 'These are the men that have loved our Lord when they were in the world, and that have left all for His holy name; and He hath sent us to fetch them, and we have brought them thus far on their desired journey, that they may go in and look their Redeemer in the face with joy..."



"Now I saw in my dream, that these two men went in at the gate; and lo, as they entered, they were transfigured; and they had raiment put on that shone like gold. There were also that met them with harps and crowns, and gave them to them; the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of honour. Then I heard in my dream, that all the bells in the city rang again for joy, and that it was said to them, 'ENTER YE INTO THE JOY OF YOUR LORD.'"

"I also heard the men themselves, that they sang with a loud voice, saying, 'BLESSING, AND HONOUR, AND GLORY, AND POWER, BE UNTO HIM THAT SITTETH UPON THE THRONE, AND UNTO THE LAMB, FOREVER AND EVER.'"

"Now, just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold the city shone like the sun; the streets also were paved with gold; and in them walked many men, with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps, to sing praises withal."

"There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, saying Holy, holy, holy is the LORD.' And after that they shut up the gates: which, when I had seen, I wished myself among them."

So pray with me,

"Our glorious and awesome Father, even now we lift our eyes toward You! Let us climb up near to You, and love You, and plead, and wrestle with You, and pant for deliverance from these fleshly bodies of sin. Our hearts are wandering and lifeless, and our souls mourn to think we should ever lose sight of its beloved: Jesus. Savior and Friend, wrap our lives in divine love, and keep us ever desiring You. Keep us ever humble and resigned to do Your will, more fixed on Yourself, instead of us.

Jesus, give us more of Your likeness! Your Word says that even the glance of our eyes makes Your heart beat faster. Lord, we are dark with fleshly things that some day will fall away from us when we are changed into Your glorious image. We choose to respond to the initiative of Your love. We ask for You to fill us with Your Spirit, so we are consumed with the passion of Your likeness, that our every thought is that of being with You some day. Lord Jesus, Your love, Your sacrifice, is the pattern for our lives. How we desire to be like You. Spirit of God; help us keep in step with Your working and sanctifying us each day. Fill us now! Keep filling us! Help us walk in Your power and strength. Thank You for bringing us on this great adventure of sanctification and transformation. Let us not forget Your chief aim is to make us like Jesus. Help us to surrender all our rights and privileges that we may possess the glorious fruits of the Spirit in conformity to You. We love You, Jesus. Use us, pray through us, love through us, until, in all things we reflect Your image and likeness. In our Lord Jesus' Name, Amen."

**In His strong love,
Pastor Corvin ◀◀**

Quote: "Our whole Christian life must be sustained and maintained by the Holy Ghost through the same simple faith by which we first began. Here is God's great secret of holiness; not fighting sin, but being filled with the Spirit of God. It is the old principle of the expulsive power of a stronger force and a supreme affection. Just as water excludes the air from the tumbler when it is filled with water; just as light excludes the darkness when the room is lighted, so the indwelling of the Holy Ghost excludes the presence and power of sin. In a word, the glorious privilege of being sanctified, not by works but by free grace, not by self-effort, but by simple faith in the indwelling presence and power of the Spirit of God." ... A.B. Simpson (The Holy Spirit in Galatians, pg. 139)

