

Learning to walk in the Spirit



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Against such there is no law.”

(Galatians 5:22-23)

Learning to walk in the Spirit is a key to:

- Having healthy relationships in our life
- Continually maintaining our peace and joy
- Truly shining for Jesus in our witness to others
- Helping promote unity in our homes, workplaces and church fellowships
- Maintaining greater physical and emotional health, and
- Being continually guided by the Holy Spirit so that we become all that God has planned for our life



- The Apostle Paul emphasised the importance of continually walking in love towards others
- The Apostle Paul also wrote about the consequences of flaunting our Christian liberty and living according to our old carnal and fleshly nature
- We see this in Galatians chapter five and verses 13-15



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but **through love serve one another.**”

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!” **(Galatians 5:13-15)**



- The Apostle Paul then emphasised the importance of walking in the Spirit given the consequences of living out of our fleshly nature



The Apostle Paul wrote, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 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. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.”
(Galatians 5:16-18)

- It is so important that we continually choose to walk in the Spirit and to say “no” to reacting out of our fleshly nature



- The person who is led by the Spirit will do what is right freely, and not by the compulsion of the law. Thus, he is not under the Law's bondage and condemnation
- When we love Jesus we want to do what is right to please and honour Him with our life

- The Apostle Paul described the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21



“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who *practice* such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.” **(Galatians 5:19-21)**

- Before we were saved we all used to very much operate out of the works of the flesh
- However as Christians, with God's love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, we have a new nature where it is not natural any more to want to sin (1 John 3:9)
- However as Christians we still have to choose to walk in the Spirit and to say "no" to operating out of our old fallen nature when under pressure, or when rejected and reviled by others for our faith



- The world is looking to see if there is anything different in our lives as Christians
- What the world needs to see in our lives as Christians is God's love operating in our lives in the way that we relate to others, even in the way that we relate to our enemies



This is why Jesus said,

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)

- **People do not care how much we know, but they do want to know how much we care**



The Apostle Paul in his letter to Philemon wrote,
“I thank my God, making mention of you always
in my prayers, hearing of your love and faith
which you have toward the Lord Jesus and
toward all the saints, that the sharing of your
faith may become effective by the
acknowledgment of every good thing which is in
[a]you in Christ Jesus. For we [b]have great [c]joy
and [d]consolation in your love, because the
[e]hearts of the saints have been
refreshed by you, brother.”
(Philemon 4-7)



- Learning to walk in the Spirit is a great key to living a victorious and overcoming Christian life
- So given the importance of walking in the Spirit as a believer I will now quickly look at:
 - Five things that can stop us from walking in the Spirit, and
 - Five keys, or disciplines that can help us to *consistently walk* in the Spirit as believers



Firstly five things that can stop us from walking in the Spirit



1) **PRIDE** (Where we have an over inflated opinion of our own self importance)

Proud people are more likely to be defensive and argumentative, even about trivial and irrelevant issues and invariably find it hard to say that they are sorry or wrong when they have hurt or wronged others

In the book of Proverbs we read,
“By pride comes nothing but strife,
But with the well-advised *is* wisdom.”
(Proverbs 13:10)



2) UNFORGIVENESS (Hurt people hurt people)

- We must simply refuse to allow offences into our heart by being always quick to forgive others that have hurt us



- Having unforgiving attitudes towards people will negatively affect our relationships with others as well as our relationship with God

In the book of Hebrews we read,

“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord; looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;” (Hebrews 12:14-15)



3) ENVY AND SELF SEEKING



In the book of James we read,

“Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. *For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.*” **(James 3:13-16)**

4) Not being careful about what we look at and listen to

- It is so important that we are disciplined in what we allow into our eye and ear gates
- It is so important that we do not focus on things that will arouse our carnal desires and cause us to stumble into sin
- We are now living in a world full of temptations that the enemy (the Devil) would try and use to draw us away from God's best plan for our life



- Even King David, who was referred to as being a man after God's own heart, stumbled and fell into sin when he looked upon Bathsheba bathing whilst he was walking on the roof of his house
- After looking upon her he not only committed adultery with her, but had her husband Uriah murdered by putting him on the front line of battle and by instructing Joab to get the other soldiers to draw back leaving Uriah to die **(2 Samuel 11:2-17)**
- So if King David can so stumble and fall as a man referred to as being a man after God's own heart, we all have the potential to stumble and fall if we are not careful about what we look at and listen to



This is why the Apostle Paul wrote,

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy-meditate on these things.” **(Philippians 4:8)**

AND



5) Not having enough INTIMATE fellowship with the Lord (Only Jesus can give us the peace and love that we need to always relate to others in a right manner)

In the gospel of Luke we read,

“Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary who also sat at Jesus’ feet and heard His word.”

(Luke 10:38-39)



“But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.” And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.” **(Luke 10:40-42)**



We must never allow the busyness of life to stop us from spending quality time with the LORD

Jesus Himself said,

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

(John 15:4-5)



I will now quickly look at five disciplines that can help us to consistently walk in the Spirit

1) Taking all wrong thoughts quickly captive

We must learn to be quick to take all wrong thoughts captive before they become strongholds in our mind



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

- If we do not quickly take wrong thoughts captive we will invariably become more prone to operating out of our fleshly nature as we allow frustration, fear and anxiety to influence our lives in a negative way



- The enemy will continually try and bombard our minds with thoughts that are designed to get us to lose our peace and to operate in the flesh. *We must be always quick to take ALL wrong thoughts captive and to replace them with Christ centred thoughts*

2) Being slow to anger.

(Learning to think before we speak)



In the book of James we read,

“So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” (James 1:19-20)

In the book of Proverbs we read,

“A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.” (Proverbs 15:1)

3) Spending quality time with the LORD and in God's word

- The more time that we spend in the Lord's presence the more Christ-like we become in the way that we live our life and the more we gain God's heart of compassion for others
- Meditating on the word of God helps us to replace our wrong mindsets with Kingdom thinking so that we can fully realize our life's potential IN Christ



King David wrote,

“Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:4)



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:2)

The LORD said to Joshua just before he was about to lead the Children of Israel into the Promised Land,

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

(Joshua 1:8)



The Psalmist wrote,

“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.” **(Psalm 119:9-11)**



- Spending quality time with the Lord and in God’s word helps us to become *mature in our walk with the Lord*. **Having a genuine love for others and self control is evidence of this maturity**

4) Learning to be content with what God has entrusted to us in EVERY season of our life

- True contentment can only be found in a whole hearted loving relationship with Jesus Christ.
- When we put Christ first in our life, God promises to meet our every NEED in life
- We need to learn to be content with what God has called us to do in life and with what He blesses us with. We need to be simply the best at what God has called us to be. This is a key to enjoying the abundant life that Jesus spoke of



The Apostle Paul wrote,

“Now godliness with contentment is great gain.
For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out... But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

(1 Timothy 6:6, 7, 9-10)



The Apostle Paul also wrote,

“But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your^[a] care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:” **(Philippians 4:10-11)**

AND



5) LIVING A LIFE THAT IS TRULY SURRENDERED TO JESUS CHRIST

- If our lives are truly surrendered to Jesus Christ we will instinctively walk in the Spirit and in love towards others



- Our highest potential in life will only be realised if we are prepared to daily die to our own selfish ambition and to live for Christ

Jesus Himself said,

“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.” (Luke 9:23-24)



Jesus Himself said,

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honour.”

(John 12:24-26)



- Dying to self is a great key to consistently walking in the Spirit and to becoming ALL that God has planned for our life

The Apostle Paul who achieved so much for God's Kingdom wrote,

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

(Galatians 2:20)



SO IN CONCLUSION

- May I again emphasise the importance of learning to walk in the Spirit



- As we learn to consistently walk in the Spirit we will truly shine in our world for Jesus and experience the fullness of life that Jesus spoke of in John 10:10, life and life more abundantly

Consistently walking in the Spirit enables us to;

- Enjoy healthier relationships in our life
- Continually maintain our peace and joy in our heart and life, even during the storms of life
- Truly shine for Jesus in our witness to others
- Be people who help to promote unity in our homes, workplaces and church fellowships
- Enjoy greater physical and emotional health, and
- Be continually guided by the Holy Spirit so that we can become all that God has planned for our life



- Being continually guided by the Holy Spirit is a great key to remaining in the will of God for our life and to seeing God's best plan for our life coming to pass



Jesus Himself said,

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” **(John 16:13)**

- I just want to finish by encouraging you that God has so much planned for every believer's life



- It is by simply learning to walk in the Spirit and in being continually guided by the Holy Spirit that we can see all that God has planned for our lives coming to pass
- Just believe that your life can make a great eternal difference in the lives of many in the days to come as you simply allow Jesus Christ to be Lord of all of your life

**I will finish with the words of the Apostle Paul,
“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly
abundantly above all that we ask or think,
according to the power that works in us,”
(Ephesians 3:20)**

