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# The Holy Spirit—Our Helper

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, March 11, 2012

## The Spirit and The Believer’s Walk

*“When we ‘walk in the Spirit,’ we are in a place of security, safety, and scope. The ‘walk’ of the believer is his life, his liberty, his activity, his creativeness, and his guidance under the controlling power of the Holy Spirit.”*<sup>1</sup>

This morning, we continue our consideration of the specific “helps” that the Holy Spirit gives the individual believer by taking up the subject of our “walk” in the Spirit.

Our “walk” is a very common metaphor in the New Testament. The Greek word *peripateo*--translated “walk”-- comes from the combination of two words. The word *pateo* means “to tread”. (You probably recognize that we get the the word “patio” from it.) And the preposition *peri* means “around”. So, figuratively, our *peripateo* is our daily course as we go about practical living. And the Bible gives us guidance as to how we are to be submitted to the Holy Spirit’s guidance and help in our daily course of practical living--our “walk”.

### I. WHY DO WE NEED THE SPIRIT’S HELP IN OUR WALK?

- A. The Bible tells us that, apart from Jesus Christ, our “walk” is not merely “neutral”, but is actually under the influence of harmful and diabolical forces. Ephesians 2:1-3, we’re told, “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.” Apart from God’s grace, we were dead toward God. But we were the “walking dead”; because we did indeed “walk”--but our walk was under the influences of this world and in accordance with the devil.
- B. Not only were we under the pressure of these forces, but we--on our own--did not even have the ability to conduct our walk in a way that was pleasing to God or good for ourselves. As it says in Jeremiah 10:23, “O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.” It was never God’s design for human beings that they walk independent of Him. It’s--by design--not in them to do so.

### II. WHAT IS THE OPPOSITE OF WALKING IN THE SPIRIT?

- A. The above helps us to appreciate what happens when someone tries to “walk” independently from God--that is, in the power of the flesh. In Galatians 5, Paul explains that a conflict exists between two principles in us that cannot be reconciled with one another. “For the flesh” (that is, that principle of our fallenness at work in us which we have inherited from Adam after the fall) “lusts” (that is, strongly desires) “against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh . . .” (v. 17). These two principles are in diametric opposition to one another; and can never be made to cooperate. They are “contrary to one another”. To choose to gratify one is to choose to set one's self in opposition to the other. This is even true of the believer. Therefore, Paul warns--in words that every believer can relate to--that you “cannot do the things that you wish” As he says elsewhere, “For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do” (Romans 7:15).

- B. What's more, Paul speaks of the dreadfulness of the results of that kind of walk: "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). This is the result of trying to "walk in the power of the flesh in accordance with the strict letter of God's law--which we do not have it in us to do!
- C. But by contrast, Paul writes that, "if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law"; that is, we are not under the principle of the letter of the law as a means of righteousness before God. Instead, Paul writes, "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16); and that "if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law" (v. 18). To walk in the Spirit is to live a daily, practical life that is pleasing to God; because it exhibits the "fruit" of the Spirit--"love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law" (vv. 22-23). As he writes in Romans 8:1-9a; "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit . . ."

### III. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO WALK IN THE SPIRIT?

- A. To "walk" in the Spirit requires to things. First, it requires a 'putting-to-death' of the opposite principle--that is, the principle of the flesh. Paul wrote, "And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24). To crucify something is to hang it up for its death. It is *not* to put it up on the cross and then change one's mind later and take it down. We must not, as John Stott says, crucify the flesh then "finger the nails" doubtfully. Paul puts it in very practical terms. We must crucify the flesh (which is a principle that we cannot see) "with its passions and desires" (which we very readily identify). We are not to "gratify" those desires; but rather "crucify" or "mortify" them (see also Romans 8:12-14
- B. Second we are to "walk"--as it were, place our feet at the point of decision that each new step requires--as the Spirit directs. Paul says, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25). We are to no longer live in the domain of the law through the flesh, but rather in the domain of the Spirit. The word that Paul uses here for walk is different from the word in verse 16. This word (*stoicheo*) means to advance in a line; or, as it is in the NIV, "keep in step". It's as if the Holy Spirit sets the drumbeat; and we are to march in step--letting Him direct our steps and exhibit His fruit in us. We present ourselves as "living sacrifices" (Romans 12:1-2), and our bodily members as "slaves of righteousness for holiness"

(Romans 6:19); remembering Galatians 2:20; “ 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.”

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<sup>1</sup>William Fitch, *The Ministry of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), p. 166.

<sup>2</sup>All Scripture readings are taken from *the Holy Bible, New King James Version*; copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.