

How Do You Walk in the Spirit?



Jim Cymbala January 2, 2021

Paul said, “So I say, *walk in the Spirit*, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). Sounds simple, doesn’t it? Just walk by the Spirit. Problem solved! But how in the world do you apply a verse like that? How do you walk in the Spirit? What does that look like on a daily basis?

We can picture what it meant to walk with Jesus. The disciples did that. If Jesus stayed in Capernaum for five days, they stayed in Capernaum for five days. If Jesus stopped for lunch, they stopped for lunch. If he turned to the right and went down the road, they followed behind him. But how do we do that with the invisible Holy Spirit? Some might say, “Just go by the Word.” But it’s that very Word that tells us to walk by the Spirit. Filling our hearts with Scripture builds faith and encourages us. But here we’re told that following the Spirit and keeping in step with him is the only deliverance from indulging our lower nature and its ugly potential. How do we do that?

First of all, reliance on the Spirit means we have his help in repenting of those sins that so easily attach themselves to us. Many believers lie to themselves and are in denial as to the “secret treaty” they’ve made with disobedience. The Holy Spirit alone can help us keep real with God. Whether we struggle with overt wrong actions or subtler unchristlike attitudes, the Spirit’s light focuses directly on the infection and helps us sincerely turn away from it. Repentance is a 180-degree U-turn from sin and selfishness back to God.

Walking by the Spirit is a twenty-four hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week lifestyle. It’s not about going to church on Sundays. It requires much prayer and sensitivity. As the Holy Spirit does precious work, he influences the formation of desires within us, deadening our selfish tendencies toward sin. We overcome the lower nature not by fighting against it ourselves — a losing battle if there ever was one — but by allowing the Holy Spirit to exert his power, every second of the day, on our behalf. In fact, the only one who can put the flesh to death is the Spirit of life.

The Spirit of Jesus within us wants to lovingly manage our days and lead us out into the clean, fresh air of Christlike words, thoughts, and actions. Ask the Lord to make you holy as he is holy!

Jim Cymbala began the Brooklyn Tabernacle with less than twenty members in a small, rundown building in a difficult part of the city. A native of Brooklyn, he is a longtime friend of both David and Gary Wilkerson.

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