

# Walk in the Spirit

By Tom Hill

**Bible Text:** Galatians 5:16

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An American and an Englishman viewed the Niagara whirlpool rapids. The American said, "Come, and I'll show you the greatest unused power in the world." Together they went to the foot of Niagara Falls. The American said,

"There is the greatest unused power in the world." The Englishman answered his friend, "Ah, no my brother, not so! The greatest unused power in the world is the Holy Spirit of the living God."

That conclusion causes disagreement among people, Christians and nonChristians alike. Sadly, nothing causes more fear in the minds and hearts of believers than the Holy Spirit. In fact, few Christians even talk about Him, and preachers seldom preach about His work in the lives of saints. We give credit to others rather than to the Spirit.

Consequently, we deify mankind. Our Christianity centers around self. We deny glory to God that He alone rightly deserves. It grieves the Holy Spirit and quenches His work in our lives and in the Church.

As a result, we lack the supernatural authority and ability of the Holy Spirit and do not enjoy the glorious presence of God. We face a crossroads. We need a Holy Spirit sent revival that will spiritually transform and reform our lives.

If we, the Church, you and me, are to ever again experience the glorious out pouring of the Holy Spirit in revival, we must examine the Bible for God's ways, will, and works regarding the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives. When we discover the truth, we must turn in repentance from our old ways to believe and obey God's truth. He will change our minds, hearts, and lives. It will begin a spiritual transformation in us. The supernatural authority and ability of the Holy Spirit will revive and reform us. We will know joy unspeakable and full of glory.

God gives two commands to Christians concerning the Holy Spirit. One comes calls us to be continually filled with the Spirit. The other one concerns our Christian walk. You will find it in Galatians 5:16:

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

From this passage, I want to examine some particular absolute truths about walking in the Spirit that God calls His people to believe and obey. I pray that the Holy Spirit will use these truths in your life today to bring a spiritual revival and reformation that will revolutionize your life.

### **Meaning of walking in the Spirit**

First, I want to clarify the meaning of the words "...walk in the Spirit..." In its literal sense, the word walk means to tread all around. It describes the common practice of travel on foot.

In its figurative sense, as used in this passage, the pictures how one lives. It describes behavior and conduct. It illustrates how someone regulates his/her life which follows a given standard.

In other words, its metaphorical sense describes habitual conduct and signifies the whole round of the activities of an individual's life. The Holy Spirit becomes the rule of action so that the believer orders his/her life and behavior in the power of the Holy Spirit and under His control.

The individual Christian yields to the authority and ability of the Spirit in all areas of life and thus walks in the Spirit. The believer lives under the eye of God. This Christian moves with the knowledge of God's continual onlooking.

In addition, this kind of life walks according to the word of God. It hardly seems necessary to make the point, but we often forget that the Scriptures reveal the word of God as breathed by the Holy Spirit to those who recorded it. To those who walk in the Spirit, it becomes the rule of behavior, the standard of faith and practice. All of life then revolves around faith and obedience to the Bible.

### **Mandate of walking in the Spirit**

You will note in the passage that the word comes as a command given to believers. It is not a suggestion. It is not given as a good idea. Nor does it reveal a recommendation.

Instead, God by the Spirit issues a clear directive, "...walk in the Spirit..." He demands it of all those who name the Name of Christ as Lord and Savior.

It is precisely at this point that many, if not most, Christians fail. I find many clues that lead me to this conclusion. For example, the Church of Jesus Christ today desperately needs revival. The Church has become a pale example of the Church of the New Testament, let alone of the revived Church throughout history.

Further, we know little of His glorious presence in our lives. We often mistake the response to stirring and exciting music and messages for the work of the Holy Spirit. Our worldly and fleshly influenced lives grieve and quench the work of the Holy Spirit so that we cannot identify Him and His work.

Except for space and time, I could list yet other signs of our failure to walk in the Spirit. Sadly, the Church shows little evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit, individually and collectively. The operation of the Holy Spirit produces fruit that is consistent with His character and nature. Few effects in the Church today are worthy of being attributed to the Holy Spirit.

God has begun to judge the Church for Her disobedience. He has turned His face from us and let us flounder in our rebellion. Our self-congratulations have a hollow ring to them. Too often our lives mirror the young boy who whistled in the graveyard to relieve his fears. Merely saying it is so does not make it so.

Only repentant hearts will turn His face once again upon us that He might revive and restore us. I pray with the prophet of old as recorded in Isaiah 64:1:

"Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down,  
that the mountains might flow down at thy presence."

### **Manner of life that results**

A life of walking in the Spirit requires a life of yielding to the authority and ability of the Holy Spirit in all the activities of life. It demands that the believer live in agreement with the motions and tendencies of the Spirit. A new manner of life will result. It will have several manifest features which will identify it.

In the first place, the Christian who walks in the Spirit will not live according to the flesh. Note the clear statement of our text in Galatians 5:16:

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

In the verses that follow this statement, we find some of the marks of the fleshly lifestyle in Galatians 5:19-21:

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, {20} Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, {21} Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

These works reveal the natural tendencies of the sinful, natural heart of mankind. Though not a complete listing of mankind's sins, it does reveal sins against the seventh commandment, sins against the first and second commandments, sins against the royal law of love to others, and sins against ourselves.

A walk in the Spirit keeps the believer from a manner of life marked by these fleshly sins. The Holy Spirit influences and directs the child of God into the truth, holiness, and righteousness. An upright life distinguishes the one who walks in the Spirit from the one who does not. The Spirit brings victory by His power alone.

Second, the Christian who walks in the Spirit manifests the fruit of the Spirit. These are found in Galatians 5:22-23:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, {23} Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

These inclinations and their acts flow naturally from the work of the Spirit in the life of those who walk in the Spirit. Just as a pear tree produces pears and a cherry tree produces cherries, the Holy Spirit brings forth His fruit in the life of one yielded to His authority. As you can see, the Holy Spirit always produces effects suitable to the cause and source of them, Himself.

What does the Holy Spirit want these truths to accomplish in your life today? In the first place, He wants to clarify the truth for you. I pray that He has opened your eyes to see the truth regarding walking in the Spirit. It shows us God's relationship to His creation and mankind's duty to God. He intends for His children to conform their lives to the truth.

Conformity to the truth will correct believers from error. It enables us to shun false doctrine and avoid sinful practices. It molds our judgment with instruction to believe and a command to obey. The fruit of the Spirit identifies graces and practices which we should desire. I pray that the Holy Spirit will apply these truths in your life today.

Where has the Holy Spirit identified today your failure to apply these truths in your life? Do you believe them? Or have you not applied them in your life through ignorance, doubt, or denial? Have you instead missed the truth and believed that which is false?

Do these truths describe how you live? Does the Holy Spirit govern your whole round of activities in life? Does He regulate your life, its ambitions and its actions? Do you conduct your life in accordance with God's word? Do you live in constant awareness of His glorious presence?

Rejection of these truths takes many forms. It can result from ignorance or rebellion. Often, spiritual self-satisfaction makes us immune to the Spirit's call. Our self-righteousness applauds our efforts and makes us feel like we have attained spiritual maturity.

Consequently, we rob God of the honor and obedience that He alone deserves. We dethrone His sovereign rule in our lives by the Holy Spirit. We reject His supernatural authority and ability. We miss His glorious presence and fruit, too.

What conclusions about your current spiritual condition has the Holy Spirit revealed to you today? Has He found you obedient or disobedient? Possibly, He has confirmed in your spirit that you, indeed, walk in the Spirit. To you I give encouragement to continue in His ways. Keep yielding to Him that He might bring forth in increasing abundance His fruit and righteousness in your life.

Or perhaps you have felt the sting of His rebuke as He has showed you your guilt of sin. He has shown you that your conduct grieves Him and quenches His almighty work in your life. I would remind you that God brings judgment and reproof upon all sin.

I pray that you will realize the refuge of lies that keep you from faith and obedience to these truths. I pray that you will recognize God's requirements and your obligation to them. I pray that you will repent from your sin of unbelief and disobedience and find relief in the blood of Jesus shed for sin. I pray that you will respond to these truths in your life.

As you experience the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit in your life, you begin to enjoy a spiritual transformation that will revive and reform you. May He come in grace and begin this work in your life today.

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