

## Lesson 7: Walking in the Spirit: An Everyday Dependence upon God

**Text:** Galatians 5:16

**Theme:** This lesson highlights the heart of the Christian life: It is impossible without walking in the Spirit.

**Introduction:** *This is just too much. This is more than I can do, more than I can accomplish. I'm overwhelmed. I'm tired. I'm discouraged with this Christian life stuff. No matter how hard I try. I never measure up.* Have you ever felt like that? Do you feel like you are about ready to burn out trying to live the Christian life?

The Christian life is not meant to be lived in your own strength. It is not a matter of *determination*; it is a matter of *dependence*. It is not a matter of *trying*; it is a matter of *trusting*. The issue is our learning to depend on the Holy Spirit to do His work through us, not our trying somehow to manufacture all of the evidences of the Holy Spirit through our own energy and determination.

There are three reasons why the Spirit-filled walk is the only option for really living the Christian life:

### I. The Demands of the Christian Life – You have to be walking in the Spirit to:

- A. Walk in good works – Eph 2:10
- B. Walk properly – Rom. 13:13
- C. Walk by truth or by faith not by sight – II Cor 5:7
- D. Walk in love – Eph 5:2
- E. Walk as children of the light – Eph 5:8
- F. Walk worthy of the Lord – Col 1:10
- G. Walk a walk worthy of our calling – Eph 4:1
- H. Walk as Jesus walked – I John 2:6
- I. More **Power** Walking
  1. Love one another – John 13:34
  2. Bring every thought into obedience to Christ – II Cor 10:5
  3. Give of thanks for everything – Eph 5:20
  4. Give praise to God – I Peter 2:9
  5. Rejoice always and never stop praying – I Thess 5:16-17

### II. The Determination of Our Enemy

- A. Who is he?
  1. A formidable enemy not to be taken lightly – Eph 6:12-20
  2. A **devouring** lion – I Peter 5:8
  3. A deceitful serpent – Rev 12:9
- B. Who does he want?
  1. Christians
  2. Illustration: **Peter** (Luke 22:31)
- C. What does he want to do
  1. To cause us failure with his devices and strategies (II Cor 2:11)
  2. Illustration: Filing cabinet with your name listing devices that work to cause you to stumble.

### III. The Destructive Influence of the Flesh

- Walk in Spirit and you can't fulfill the lusts of the flesh.
- Flesh = naturally sinful desires from our fallen sin nature.

- Some Christians are practical atheists – they live as if there is no God.
- The battle is intense because for the believer he has two natures in a battle for authority (Gal 5:17)
- Why is this battle with our flesh so intense?
  - A. The Impact of Our Age
    1. A struggle can arise related to the difference between your physical age and your spiritual age.
    2. Old sin habits and patterns acquired over time are hard to change.
  - B. The Influence of Our **Culture**
    1. Things that seek to pull us down spiritually surround us.
    2. Don't get discouraged with the ever-present temptations. There is Holy Spirit help!
  - C. The Inadequacy of our Teaching
    1. You need to know the devices of the enemy.
    2. You need to know the deliverance of the Spirit.
  - D. The Incompatibility of Our Lifestyle with the World's Lifestyle
    1. Living a Spirit – filled life will make you different.
    2. Don't withdraw from the world, but don't become like it.
  - E. The Irresponsibility of our Lives
    1. We neglect spiritual disciplines that promote growth.
    2. We indulge in sin that is contrary to a Spirit-filled walk (Gal 5:19-21).

### • The Key: **Spiritual Breathing.**

- ☞ When you breathe, you exhale the bad carbon dioxide and inhale the oxygen.
- ☞ When you practice spiritual breathing, as soon as you sin, you exhale the sin through confession (I Jn 1:9) and you inhale the good by putting the Holy Spirit back in charge in your life.
- ☞ Do this as many times a day as necessary.
- ☞ Do this as **soon** as needed.
- ☞ Don't get on the spiritual roller coaster by going great lengths of time justifying sin and walking in the flesh
- ☞ Remember: Without Christ you can do nothing (Jn 15:5), but with Him, you can do everything (Phil 4:13).

### Application

1. When it comes to the demands of the Christian life, what areas are the hardest for you?
2. What characterizes your “walk in the Spirit?” – fallen (consistently defeated), wobbly (on shaky ground spiritually), walking (consistent dependence on Christ), jogging (trying too hard in your own strength) or sprinting (on a performance basis with God).
3. In order to resist the devil (James 4:7b) what do you need to do first (James 4:7a)?
4. What steps do you need to take to avoid the cultural influences that war against your spirit?