

Walking in The Spirit

The apostle Paul said, "*Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*" (GAL 5:16). He also said, "*If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*" (verse 25).

As Christians, we have heard this phrase throughout our lives: "*Walk in the Spirit.*" Many believers tell me they walk in the Spirit - yet they cannot tell me what that truly means. Now let me ask you: Do you walk and live in the Spirit? And what does that mean to you?

I doubt there are many of us who have even the faintest notion of what the Spirit-walk is all about. It remains a vague concept to many Christians, including ministers. But Paul makes clear how important it is to live and walk in the Spirit.

I believe "walking in the Spirit" can be defined in one sentence:

Walking in the Spirit is Simply Allowing the Holy Spirit to Do in Us What God Sent Him to Do.

I believe you can't allow Him to do that work until you understand why God sent the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said of the Father, "*He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*" (JN 14:16-17).

The Holy Ghost has been sent down for us from the Father to accomplish one (and only one) eternal purpose. And unless we understand His mission and work in us, we will make one of two mistakes:

One, we will settle for a small portion of His work - such as a few of the spiritual gifts - mistakenly thinking this is all of Him and

missing the grand work of His eternal purpose in our life. Or, two, we will quench the Spirit within us and ignore Him completely, believing He's mysterious and that His presence is something we must take by faith and never understand.

The sad truth is that the church is often guilty of both of these grave mistakes! We become satisfied that His work in us is merely to give us one or two of His gifts. We think, "I must be walking in the Spirit, because His gifts operate in me." Yet we can operate in the gifts without walking in the Spirit. Paul says we can prophesy, heal and speak with tongues - but if we do not have love, we are nothing. We are not operating in the Spirit.

Many Christians today are convinced they are walking in the Spirit simply because they pray in tongues. They reason, "How could I pray in tongues and not be walking in the Spirit?" But praying in tongues is not necessarily praying in the Spirit. Many who desire to pray in the Spirit immediately launch out in tongues - and yet their minds are totally elsewhere!

The Bible says if you're speaking in tongues, your understanding is not fruitful. If we speak with tongues, let us also pray with our understanding. Praying in the Spirit can include praying in tongues - but it is so much more than that!

How many believers have been stunted in their spiritual growth because they focused on one or two particular gifts of the Spirit, yet went no further? They were somehow convinced that the Holy Spirit's only work was to hand out gifts!

Yet many other Christians experience the second mistake: **The Holy Spirit is quenched inside them - seldom acknowledged, rarely consulted, and unable to do in them what God sent Him to do!**

We acknowledge the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross, and we believe He abides in us and we know His presence. But we do not acknowledge the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit within us. I ask you - do you talk to the Holy Spirit as you do Jesus? Do you acknowledge Him daily?

I admit, this has been a problem for me. I had an experience recently in which the Holy Spirit spoke to me in my prayer closet. He said, "David, acknowledge Me. Don't keep me in some dark corner of your mind and heart. Acknowledge that I am manifesting Myself to you right now!"

A time must come when you get serious about why the Holy Spirit has been given to you. You must be able to say, "Holy Spirit, the Bible says You were sent to me as a gift from my heavenly Father. The Word says You live in me. Tell

me - why have You come? What is Your eternal purpose? What are You trying to accomplish in me?"

The Eternal Purpose of The Holy Spirit in Us Is To Bring Us Home to Jesus Christ as His Eternal, Spotless Bride.

The Holy Spirit has come to dwell in you and me to seal, sanctify, empower and prepare us - all for the bridehood of Christ. He has been sent into our world to prepare a bride for marriage to Christ!

An Old Testament type of this relationship between believers and the Holy Spirit is found in Genesis 24. Abraham sent his eldest servant Eliezer to find a bride for his son Isaac. Eliezer's name means "mighty, divine helper" - a type of the Holy Spirit. And just as surely as this mighty helper came back with Rebekah to present her as a bride to Isaac, likewise the Holy Spirit will not fail to bring back a bride for our Lord Jesus Christ.

God chose Rebekah as a bride for Isaac - and the Lord led Eliezer right to her. The servant's entire mission and purpose was focused on one thing: to bring Rebekah to Isaac - to get her to leave all she had, and to be enamored of Isaac and espoused to him. Rebekah's parents said to Eliezer, *"The thing proceedeth from the LORD... take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife..."* (GEN 24:50-51).

And, beloved, so it is with you and me! God chose us to be His bride. Our salvation - our being chosen for Christ - was done by the Lord. He sent the Holy Spirit to lead us to Jesus - and if we trust Him, the Spirit will bring us safely home as Christ's eternal bride!

Don't think for a moment you chose Christ first. You were a stranger, an alien - and God chose you.

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you..." JN 15:16

"...but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." JN 15:19

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world..." EPH 1:4

"...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:" 2.THESS 2:13

Moses told Israel they were a special, chosen people: *"For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth."* (DEUT 7:6).

Oh, how the Israelites loved this message! They loved being chosen, being special in God's eyes. But they wanted to enjoy the benefits of this without taking on the obligation and discipline of becoming worthy of their Master!

You see, Eliezer had told Rebekah, "You have been chosen. Now I will bless you with my blessings!" And Rebekah put on the gold bracelets and earrings, jewels, silver and expensive clothes he'd provided for her. Then Eliezer said, "Come, go with me!"

Yet suppose Rebekah had answered, "Thank you for choosing me, and for all these blessings. But I can't go now - I'm enjoying my present place too much!"

I ask you, **don't we respond the same way?** We take all the blessings - all the gold and silver - and we accept the "chosenness". But there comes a time when we must get up and go! We have to go with our Eliezer, the Holy Ghost. He tells us, "I have a divine purpose. I came with a mission from God - and I'm going to complete it!" And just as Eliezer came home with a bride for Isaac, the Holy Spirit will not come back empty-handed.

The nation of Israel never got up and followed the Lord's leading to the Promised Land. They never followed the Spirit at all costs. They continued in stubborn rebellion, backsliding, spiritual harlotry and idolatry. **They were chosen, but not cleansed!** They were special, but they never separated themselves unto Him. And when it was time to go into Canaan, they were not ready. Instead, they were turned aside, having learned nothing in the wilderness. They were as backslidden as they had been at the beginning. What a tragedy! Forty years of no growth - of only living for self!

This is truly a picture of modern-day Christianity. We gloat in being chosen and called of God, but we do not want the discipline of the Holy Ghost to prepare us for the

holiness of the bridehood. We take all His blessings, His gold and silver and His great provision. But when the Holy Spirit says, "Let's get up and go, it's time to get prepared as a bride for the Master" - then it's a different story!

If you were to tell me you are saved, that you are chosen in Christ and that you love Him, I would have to ask: "Do you have a 'Rebekah heart'? Is Jesus the lover of your soul? Is your love for Him growing and consuming your heart?" Rebekah was asked, *"Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go."* (GEN 24:58).

Everything the Holy Spirit Does in Us Is Related to His Mission.

The Holy Spirit does not perform His work in us in some disjointed, haphazard way. He doesn't exist simply to help us cope with life, to get us through crises and to see us through lonely nights. He isn't there just to pick us up and pump in a little more strength before putting us back into the race.

No, everything the Holy Ghost does is related to His reason for coming - to bring us home as a prepared bride. And He acts only in keeping with that mission! Yes, He is our Guide, our Comforter, our Strength in time of need. But He uses every act of deliverance - every touch, every manifestation of Himself in us - to make us more suitable as a bride.

Neither is the Holy Ghost here just to give gifts to the world. No, His every gift has a purpose behind it. If you prophesy, that prophecy has one purpose: to glorify Christ and to make the world and His church fall in love with Him! Every time someone is healed the Holy Ghost is saying, "Take a look. That's your Jesus! Isn't He wonderful? He is healing - and you're just seeing the manifestation of who He is!"

Those gifts are our Eliezer, saying, "Do you love Him? Look at what He's done for you!" Everything He does points to Jesus, for the Spirit *"...shall not speak of himself..."* (JN 16:13). *"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father... he shall testify of me:"* (JN 15:26).

The Holy Spirit has only one message; everything he teaches leads to one central truth. He may shine in us like a many-splendored jewel,

but every ray of truth is meant to bring us to a single truth, and it is this:

"You are not your own - you have been bought with a price. You have been chosen to be espoused to Christ. And I, the Spirit of God, have been sent to reveal to you the truth that will set you free from all other lovers. My truth will break every bondage to sin and deal with all unbelief. For you are not of this world; you are headed for a glorious meeting with your espoused and are being readied for His marriage supper. All things are now ready - and I am preparing you! I want to present you spotless, with passionate love in your heart for Him."

That's the work of the Holy Spirit - to manifest Jesus to the Church, so that we will fall in love with Him. And that love will keep us! The Bible says if you walk in that kind of spirit, you'll not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Why? Because the Spirit is enamoring your heart to Christ. The Holy Spirit comes to open Jesus to us - to show us the beauty of His holiness.

We talk a lot about Holy-Ghost guidance. We cry out, "Lead me, Lord. Show me the way to go." Yet we do not yield to His guidance! Instead, we spend our time trying to decide, "Did I hear the right voice? Or did I miss it? Was it just my flesh? Why didn't it work out the way I thought it should?" We become so concerned about "getting it right" that we end up not trusting the Holy Ghost at all! We do not believe He abides in us, that He has an eternal purpose, that if we'll just yield to Him, He'll guide us into God's plan.

I ask you: Why are the manifestations and gifts of the Spirit given? Paul said it was for our profit: "***But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.***" (1.COR 12:7). The gift of wisdom has nothing to do with the wisdom of this world. Rather, it is wisdom in the things of Christ. Faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, interpretations - what is the profit of these gifts "withal"? It is to bring us to Christ as a bride!

Everything He does aims in that direction - and although we may forget this, the Holy Spirit never does. Not one of these gifts has any meaning whatsoever if it is

separated from the Holy Spirit's eternal purpose. Instead it becomes only a "clanging gymbal." The operation of spiritual gifts have meaning only as they conform us to the likeness to Jesus Christ!

Have you ever been to a miracle or healing meeting? Did what you see humble you? Did it show you the "exceeding sinfulness of sin"? Did it flood your soul with love for Jesus? Did it make you long for His return? If not, then the Holy Spirit was not present - because that is His work!

His purpose is to draw the bride nearer to the Bridegroom. And if that didn't happen, then what you saw was of the flesh!

The Holy Ghost does not come to entertain, to provide signs and wonders and miracles just to thrill us or make us feel good. No, every one of His workings has this divine purpose: "I'm preparing a bride."

The work, ministry and mission of the Holy Spirit is singular: **It is to wean us from the world... to create a longing for us in Jesus' soon appearance... to convict us of everything that would blemish us... to turn our eyes away from everything but Jesus... to adorn us with the ornaments of a passionate desire to be with Him as His bride!**

The Holy Spirit must grieve as He beholds pastors and evangelists today turning His ministry into a circus. The Spirit cannot bear the manipulations and fleshly showmanship, all done in His name! I couldn't begin to explain to you some of the recent gimmicks I've heard about that are used to try to create a sense of His presence. How grievous that must be to God's heart. And it is blasphemy against the Spirit of God!

In every healing, prophecy and manifestation of God's glory in His house, the Holy Spirit is at work, saying to us, "This is the love of your espoused - this is what He is like. Isn't He wonderful? Isn't He kind, gentle, considerate, and merciful? Yet you're seeing only a glimpse of Him to whom I lead you!"

If the Holy Spirit is at work in a church, then every song, every word of praise, every note of every instrument are all given unction by the Spirit to exalt Christ. The spirit

is doing what He has been called to do - presenting us to our Bridegroom in all His glory and majesty.

Now let me show one of the most glorious works of the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit Has Been Sent to Give Us a Foretaste of Christ!

A foretaste is an advance taste or realization. The Bible calls it an earnest - "*...the earnest of our inheritance...*" (EPH 1:14). It means to bring a taste of the whole before we have the whole. Our inheritance is Christ Himself - and the Holy Spirit brings us into His very presence as a foretaste of being received as His bride, enjoying everlasting love and communion with Him.

Paul describes a people of God who are "*...sealed with the Holy Spirit...*" (EPH 1:13). This speaks of a people specially marked by a work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit has produced in them a distinguishing mark, a glorious inner work - something supernatural that has changed them forever.

They are not ordinary believers anymore. They are no longer "of this world," since they have set their affections on things above, not on things of this earth. They are not moved by the world's events; rather, they are unshakable. They are no longer lukewarm or half-hearted. Instead, their hearts cry out night and day, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus..."

What happened to change them? What did the Holy Spirit do in these believers? What marked and sealed them forever as the Lord's possession? Simply This: **The Holy Ghost gave them a foretaste of the glory of His presence! He came to them, rolled back heaven - and they experienced a supernatural manifestation of His exceeding greatness!**

This is why it is so necessary that God's house be holy - why our hearts and hands must be clean; why we can have nothing in us to hinder the Spirit's work. It is because the Spirit of God delights in pulling back the veil, to give us a foretaste of what is coming!

Right now the Holy Spirit is opening the eyes of His chosen ones - "*...The eyes of your understanding being enlightened...*" (EPH 1:18). The Holy Spirit comes to a church that

wants Him and is praying... to shepherds who are broken before God... to believers who have no concern other than to see the body of Christ conformed to the image of heaven.

God is sealing such people right now! You can go to meetings where Jesus is so real that you taste a little bit of heaven in your soul. You come away with such a sense of eternal reality that your problems no longer bother you, the lapsing economy doesn't shake you, and you're especially not afraid of the devil. God puts a holy fire in your soul, and you say, "This is supernatural. This isn't me - this is God's Spirit working in me!"

He gives us a "little heaven" to go to heaven with - a whetting of our appetite. He opens the windows of heaven and lets us look into the glory that will be ours. We get a taste of His holiness, His peace, His rest, His love - and we are forever spoiled for this earth, because we yearn for the fullness of what we have tasted!

The Spirit's Mission Is Not Complete Until He Creates In Us a Passionate, Ever-Increasing Yearning For Christ!

What kind of bride do you think the Spirit will present to Jesus Christ on the day of Revelation? One who is half-hearted? Whose love is lukewarm, or cold? Who is not devoted to Jesus? Who does not want intimacy with Christ?

If you truly love Jesus, He's never out of your mind. He is present in you every waking moment. Some Christians think, "That will happen after I die. When I get to heaven, everything will change. I'll become the special bride of the Lord then. "No, dying doesn't sanctify anybody! The Holy Ghost is here today; He's alive and working in you - to produce in you a passionate love for Christ on this side of death!

Romans 8:26 describes one of the most powerful works of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer: *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."*

What is this groaning of the Holy Spirit deep inside the heart? What is this emotion that is so profound there are no words to express it?

The Hebrew word used for groaning means a yearning - a longing for more of Christ. You yearn after Jesus so much that you sit in His presence and nothing comes out but a deep groaning - something that cannot be uttered. It says, "Jesus, You're the only happiness there is in this world. I've tasted and seen that You're good - and I want all of You."

This is the deep, inner cry of someone who hungers for holiness and is anguished over his iniquities. Yet he admits, "I don't know how to pray. I don't know what to pray for, or as I should." His heart's cry is: "Holy Spirit come! You know the mind of God. You know how to pray according to the will of the Father. Walk with me - take control!"

This is the mark of one who is walking in the Spirit: He has an insatiable appetite for Jesus. Yet it's not just because he's sick of all the garbage he sees in the world - all the filth, crime, drugs and the unemployment. No, rather, it's something very positive. Like Paul, he's just anxious to depart and be with the Lord!

This person is being moved upon by the Spirit to go after Christ with such passion and emotion that He is overwhelmed. His heart so longs for Christ, no words can express his hunger and love. It is a marvellous, powerful experience - yet it is also painful, because he cannot yet come into the fullness that awaits him!

Sadly, few today have this passionate groaning after Christ. There is no hungering or thirsting, and so little passion. Each Sunday churches are packed with Christians who never question or examine their love for Christ!

But the Holy Ghost has found His people! They're allowing the Spirit to take control. They're beginning to yield to Him - and the more they do, the more His inner groaning comes forth.

Dear Saint, what has happened in your life since you got saved? Are you just going through the motions? Are you lukewarm? Are you afraid to get "on fire" for the Lord because you'll be considered a fanatic?

Ask the Holy Ghost to so reveal Christ to your heart that you'll be totally weaned from this world. That's what happened to Abraham. He said, "I'm only passing through here." He was looking for a city whose builder and maker was God. He had a vision, and his eyes were opened to eternity.

Can you say right now you're ready to go with Him, that you want Him more than your very life? You may say that often - but do you mean it when you sing, "He's more than life to me"? Are you more passionately in love with Jesus than when you first met Him?

Right now, the Holy Spirit is poking at the dying embers of your love. It is because He is desirous of setting your heart on fire. Are you allowing the Spirit of God to convict you of sin and unbelief? If so, rejoice! He wants you to be cleansed from every spot or wrinkle on that day when you meet your Bridegroom!

So yield to His leading. Let Him do His work in you completely - and you truly will know what it means to walk in the Spirit!

by David Wilkerson
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