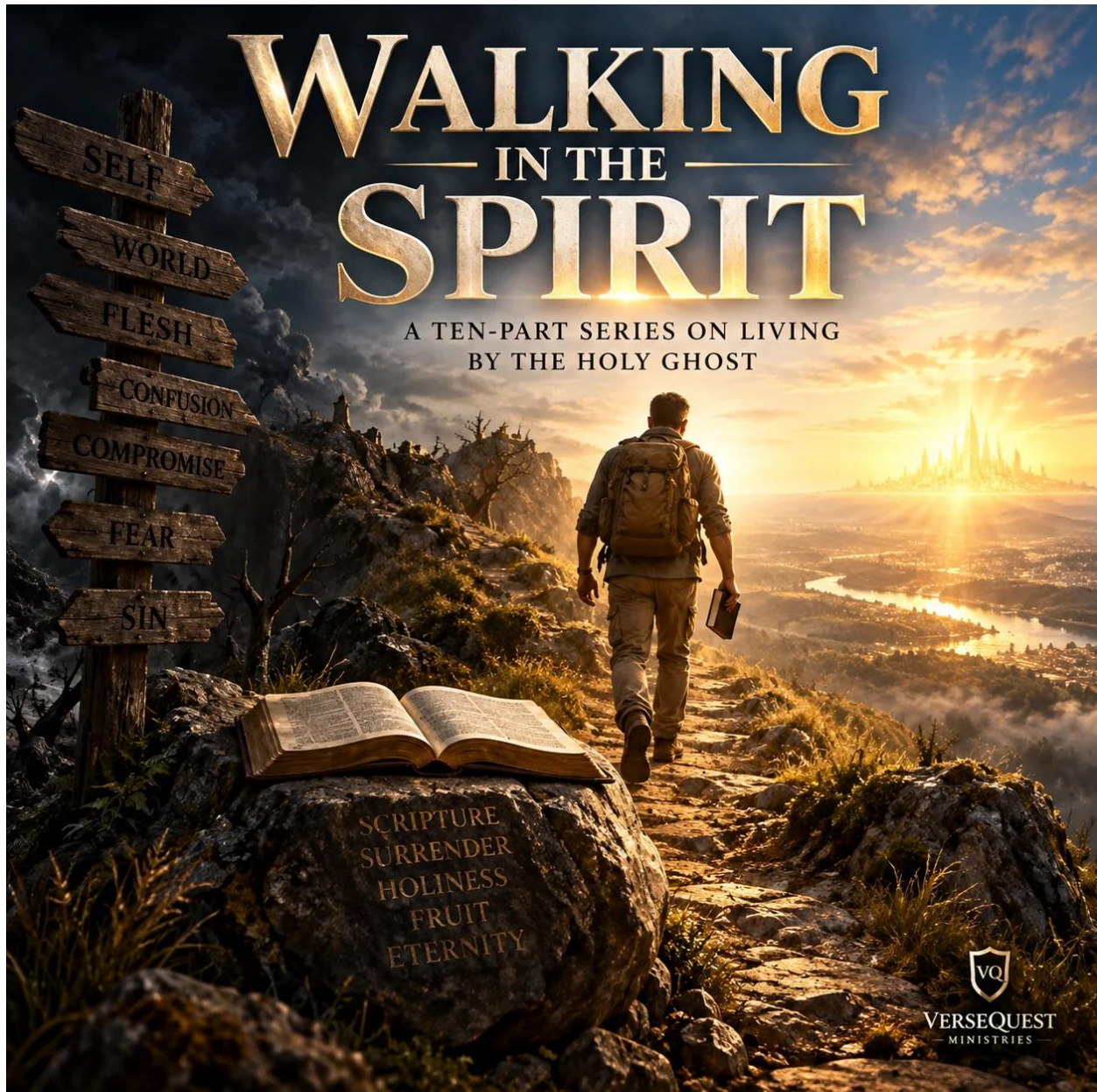


Walking in the Spirit  
Not Charismatic Theater, but Biblical Obedience

Series 1-10

By Paul Tackett

VerseQuest Ministries





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### **Walking in the Spirit**

#### **Not Charismatic Theater, but Biblical Obedience**

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## **Walking in the Spirit — Not Charismatic Theater, but Biblical Obedience**

There may be no subject in modern Christianity that has been buried under more religious fog than the subject of walking in the Spirit. The expression itself is perfectly plain. Paul wrote, “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). He did not say roll in the Spirit, collapse in the Spirit, babble in the Spirit, shake in the Spirit, scream in the Spirit, or lose control of yourself in the Spirit. He said walk. Walking is deliberate. Walking has direction. Walking requires one step after another. It happens when the building is empty, the music is silent, the preacher has gone home, and nobody is standing nearby to admire how spiritual you appear. A man can manufacture a religious moment. Walking requires a life. A church service may last two hours; the Christian still has another twenty-two hours in that day in which somebody is going to govern his thoughts, tongue, temper, appetite, imagination, decisions, and conduct. That is where this series begins.

The Holy Ghost has been turned by much modern religion into something resembling spiritual electricity. Get the atmosphere right, repeat the music long enough, dim the lights, raise the volume, work the crowd into the proper emotional state, and supposedly the Spirit begins moving. Then if enough people lose control of themselves, somebody announces that God has taken control. The Bible gives you the exact opposite picture. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance” (Galatians 5:22–23). Temperance is control. The Spirit of God does not have to reduce a Christian to disorder to prove He is present. God is not “the author of confusion, but of peace” (1 Corinthians 14:33), and Paul concludes his instructions concerning spiritual manifestations by saying, “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40). The Holy Ghost who inspired those verses did not suddenly forget them when modern religion discovered amplification systems.

Walking in the Spirit begins with understanding who the Holy Ghost actually is. He is not an influence, mood, religious sensation, cosmic force, goose bump, emotional surge, or something a preacher throws across a platform. He is God. He speaks, teaches, leads, witnesses, comforts, convicts, seals, fills, can be grieved, and makes intercession for the saints. Jesus called Him “the Spirit of truth” (John 16:13) and said, “He shall glorify me” (John 16:14). That last statement gives away the whole direction of His ministry. The Spirit points toward Jesus Christ, not toward the Christian displaying how spiritual he thinks he is. Whenever a religious movement spends more time advertising manifestations than magnifying Christ, more time describing experiences than expounding Scripture, and more time telling you what somebody felt than what God wrote, something has gotten badly out

of order. The Holy Ghost is never jealous of the Bible because He wrote it. He is never tired of Christ because He glorifies Him.

Every saved believer in this present Church Age possesses the Holy Ghost. Romans 8:9 says, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Ephesians 1:13 says that after believing the gospel, "ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." First Corinthians 6:19 says the believer's body is "the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you." You do not receive one-third of the Holy Ghost when you trust Christ and then qualify for the remaining two-thirds after enough spiritual exertion. God does not ship the third Person of the Trinity in installments. The saved believer is indwelt and sealed. Yet that same believer is commanded, "be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). The distinction matters. Indwelling concerns possession. Filling concerns control. The question is not whether the Christian has the Spirit; the question is whether the Spirit practically governs the Christian. You can own a Bible and never open it. You can have the Holy Ghost dwelling within and still walk after the flesh. That is why the command remains.

And there is the enemy: the flesh. Galatians 5:17 says, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." Contrary does not mean mildly incompatible. It means war. Salvation does not rehabilitate Adam's old nature, teach it table manners, wash its face, straighten its tie, and enroll it in Sunday school. Flesh remains flesh. Romans 7:18 says, "in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing." God did not ask Adam's old nature for a character reference. He sentenced the old man to the cross. Romans 6:6 says, "our old man is crucified with him." The Christian life is therefore not an improvement program for the flesh. It is the believer learning to deny the flesh, reckon the old man dead, yield to God, mortify sinful deeds, and walk according to the new life he possesses in Jesus Christ. The flesh does not need encouragement. It has been encouraging itself since Genesis 3.

That conflict reaches first into the mind. Romans 8:5 says, "they that are after the Spirit" mind "the things of the Spirit," while the fleshly mind occupies itself with the things of the flesh. The world understands this principle better than many Christians. Advertisers know repeated images cultivate desire. Entertainers know repetition normalizes conduct. Propaganda knows the mind can be conditioned. Social pressure knows that what seemed shocking yesterday can become ordinary tomorrow if repeated often enough. Then a Christian pours six days of vanity, lust, greed, outrage, mockery, unbelief, and foolishness into his head and wonders why a thirty-five-minute sermon has trouble cleaning out the basement. Philippians 4:8 does not say think about whatever crawls through the door. It tells you what deserves residency: things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy. Where the mind camps, the feet eventually follow.

Walking in the Spirit also means yielding the throne. Something is going to sit there. Pride volunteers early. Lust applies next. Fear has paperwork ready. Bitterness has been waiting in the lobby. Ambition believes it deserves the position. Anger has already drafted executive orders. The flesh does not merely want a vote; it wants control. Romans 6:13 therefore says, “yield yourselves unto God.” Yielding is one of the least fashionable words in a culture trained to worship self. Modern man is instructed to discover himself, affirm himself, trust himself, celebrate himself, express himself, protect himself, and eventually build a shrine to himself with enough mirrors that nobody else can enter the room. Scripture says, “ye are not your own” (1 Corinthians 6:19). The believer was “bought with a price” (1 Corinthians 6:20). Calvary settled ownership. The Christian life begins to make sense when self finally stops contesting the deed.

Then comes mortification, another word modern religion would prefer to leave in a dusty dictionary. Romans 8:13 says, “if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” Colossians 3:5 says, “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.” God does not tell the believer to negotiate with lust, understand bitterness better, rebrand covetousness, explain away anger, or learn to coexist with pride. He says kill the deeds. Sin is not a houseplant requiring better lighting. It is an enemy. The flesh is persistent enough that you may bury one appetite Monday and hear it scratching at the coffin by Thursday, but persistence does not grant authority. Some things have to be killed repeatedly because the old nature has never respected a funeral. Grace does not excuse that battle; grace gives the believer every reason to fight it from a position of eternal acceptance in Christ.

Yet Christianity is not defined merely by what gets killed. The Holy Ghost produces something positive in the life: fruit. Galatians 5:22–23 gives the evidence plainly. Fruit grows from life within. It cannot be stapled to a dead tree before the church service and passed off as maturity. Love must survive people. Joy must survive disappointment. Peace must survive disorder. Longsuffering must survive irritation. Gentleness must survive authority. Goodness must survive secrecy. Faith must survive delay. Meekness must survive correction. Temperance must survive appetite. Anybody can act spiritual while everything goes his way. Put pressure on a man and eventually the contents come out. That is when the orchard gets inspected. Spiritual fruit is not measured by how high somebody jumps in a church service but by how straight he walks when he comes down.

Being led by the Spirit is another truth that must be rescued from religious imagination. Romans 8:14 says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” That verse has been stretched until nearly every personal impulse can squeeze underneath it. “God told me” has become a convenient way to end discussion, bypass Scripture, and give human preference a divine signature. But the Holy Ghost who inspired the Book will

never lead contrary to the Book. He does not command purity in writing and whisper adultery privately. He does not command truth and then provide a special exemption for dishonesty. He does not command responsibility and lead somebody to abandon it. The safest Christian is not the person claiming the most private messages. It is the one who knows the public revelation God already gave and obeys it without demanding a supernatural footnote every fifteen minutes.

Prayer suffers from the same confusion. Ephesians 6:18 says, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," and Jude 20 speaks of "praying in the Holy Ghost." Those phrases have been turned into mystical techniques as though heaven receives prayer only after somebody finds the secret frequency. Romans 8:26 says something far better: "the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought." The Spirit assists the believer because God knows what we do not know. Prayer in the Spirit is prayer under divine government, shaped by truth, offered through Jesus Christ, submitted to the Father's will, strengthened by Scripture, accompanied by confession, thanksgiving, intercession, and perseverance. The Holy Ghost does not need the Christian to become less intelligent before prayer becomes spiritual. Paul said, "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also" (1 Corinthians 14:15). God is not allergic to understanding.

Walking in the Spirit also affects how believers live with other believers, and this may be where some of the most painful tests occur. Ephesians 4:3 says, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." That unity is not an ecumenical blender into which truth, error, doctrine, sentiment, and compromise are dumped until nobody can identify what anybody believes. The same chapter declares "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" and warns against being "carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:5,14). Biblical unity has bones. But unity also requires "lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2). Christians must learn the difference between contending for truth and contending for ego. Some men will cross an ocean to defend doctrine and split a church because somebody moved their chair six inches.

Finally, walking in the Spirit becomes intensely personal because the Holy Ghost can be grieved and quenched. Ephesians 4:30 says, "grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." First Thessalonians 5:19 says, "Quench not the Spirit." He is present when bitterness settles into the heart, when wrath enters the tongue, when corrupt communication leaves the mouth, when truth is resisted, when conviction is postponed, when duty is neglected, and when sin is defended. Yet He remains because the believer is "sealed unto the day of redemption." That combination should produce deep security and deep seriousness at the same time. The Christian is not afraid the Holy Ghost

will pack His bags and leave every time the believer stumbles. He should be troubled by something more personal: the One who remains can be grieved by what He sees in the house He inhabits.

This ten-part study will therefore deal with walking in the Spirit where Scripture deals with it—in the mind, the will, the body, the prayer life, the relationships, the appetites, the private conduct, the doctrine, the service, and the daily decisions of saved people. It will distinguish indwelling from filling, salvation from sanctification, Spirit baptism from mystical counterfeits, biblical leading from private imagination, spiritual prayer from religious theater, Christian unity from doctrinal compromise, and genuine fruit from manufactured excitement. None of it requires smoke machines, altered states, secret languages, falling bodies, or a preacher capable of knocking over a congregation without touching them. What it requires is considerably more demanding: a Bible, a yielded will, a crucified old man, an obedient walk, and a Christian willing to let God interfere with him.

The great tragedy of religious theater is that it makes the extraordinary look spiritual while leaving ordinary disobedience untouched. A man can claim supernatural experiences while refusing to forgive. He can speak loudly about the Holy Ghost while speaking cruelly to his family. He can chase signs while ignoring commandments. He can claim revelations while neglecting the revelation sitting closed on his desk. He can fall backward in a meeting and spend the rest of the week walking forward into every lust the flesh advertises. God is not fooled. “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25). Life and walk belong together. The Holy Ghost did not come merely to give Christians something to talk about. He came to glorify Jesus Christ and produce a life increasingly governed by Him.

And that is where the whole series is headed. The Spirit-filled life is not a man showing everybody how much Holy Ghost he has. It is the Holy Ghost showing how much of the man has been surrendered. It is flesh losing ground. Christ gaining practical control. The Bible becoming authoritative. Prayer becoming submissive. Sin becoming intolerable. Fruit becoming visible. Pride becoming smaller. Charity becoming larger. Truth becoming clearer. Obedience becoming quicker. Self becoming less impressive. Christ becoming more precious. That may never look as dramatic as religious theater, but heaven has never confused drama with power. Walking in the Spirit is not Christianity performed under stage lights. It is Jesus Christ gaining ground in a redeemed life one obedient step at a time.

**Key Passage: “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” (Galatians 5:16)**

Walking in the Spirit is one of those Bible expressions that has been dragged through so much religious mud that a man almost has to wash the phrase off before he can read it. Paul did not say, “Fall in the Spirit.” He did not say, “Shake in the Spirit,” “scream in the Spirit,” “collapse in the Spirit,” or “work yourself into such an emotional fever that somebody has to catch you before you hit the carpet.” He said, “Walk in the Spirit.” Walking is steady. Walking has direction. Walking involves one step following another. It is what a man does after the meeting is over, after the organ quits, after the crowd leaves, and after nobody is standing nearby to admire his spirituality. The Holy Ghost is not a showman hired to put on a Sunday spectacle. He is God dwelling in the believer, producing holiness, obedience, truth, discernment, spiritual fruit, and conformity to Jesus Christ. Religion loves a performance because a performance can be staged. A walk has to be lived.

The immediate context of Galatians 5 makes the matter even plainer. Paul has just said, “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh” (Galatians 5:13). The issue is not whether somebody can produce an unusual religious experience. The issue is whether the flesh is running the life. Christian liberty is not permission to turn the old nature loose and call the mess grace. The flesh wants an occasion, and it will use anything it can get—including religion. It will sit in a tavern if you let it, but it will also climb into a pulpit, grab a microphone, and put on a spiritual costume. The flesh does not care whether it is wearing a dirty shirt or a white suit so long as it remains in charge. Walking in the Spirit is God’s answer to that problem. The Spirit does not decorate the flesh. He opposes it. The Christian life is not the flesh becoming spiritual; it is the believer refusing to let the flesh govern him.

That distinction is vital because modern religion has trained multitudes to measure spirituality by excitement rather than obedience. A meeting gets loud, bodies move, music swells, people cry, somebody claims a revelation, and the whole thing is stamped “the Holy Ghost” before anybody bothers to open a Bible. But emotion is not inspiration, volume is not power, and a goose bump is not a doctrine. A Christian can be moved emotionally by a patriotic song, a funeral, a ball game, or a television commercial. The nervous system is not the third Person of the Trinity. The Holy Ghost works through truth. He glorifies Christ. He produces fruit. He leads according to the word He inspired. Walking in the Spirit therefore means much more than having a spiritual moment. It means submitting the ordinary machinery of daily life—mind, tongue, appetite, temper, desires, decisions, relationships, money, time, and conduct—to the government of God. That is less theatrical than falling backward, but it is considerably harder on the flesh.

## **1. Walking Means a Life, Not a Moment**

The Bible uses the word “walk” repeatedly to describe the practical course of a believer’s life. Ephesians 4:1 says, “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.” Ephesians 5:2 says, “walk in love.” Ephesians 5:8 says, “walk as children of light.” Colossians 2:6 says, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.” A walk is not one dramatic event; it is a continuing manner of life. Nobody takes one step across the living room and announces that he has completed a journey. Yet religion will give somebody one emotional experience twenty years ago and let him live on the memory of it while his present life bears no resemblance to the Book. God is interested in where your feet are going now. Walking in the Spirit concerns repeated choices made under biblical authority. The Holy Ghost deals with Monday morning just as surely as Sunday night, and He is every bit as interested in the kitchen table as He is in the church platform.

There is also something humbling about the word “walk.” God did not command the believer to perform spiritual acrobatics. Walking is ordinary enough for a child and demanding enough to occupy an entire lifetime. You walk one step at a time, and the Christian life works much the same way. You tell the truth when a lie would be easier. You shut your mouth when the flesh wants the last word. You turn your eyes away when lust wants another look. You forgive when pride would rather keep the account open. You open the Bible when laziness wants another hour of entertainment. You pray when worry wants to rehearse its speech for the twentieth time. None of that produces much religious fireworks, but heaven is not grading fireworks. Spirituality is built in the accumulation of obedient steps. The flesh wants a shortcut, a thrill, a sudden burst that eliminates discipline. God says walk. One foot of obedience in front of another will take a man farther than a thousand emotional leaps that land him exactly where he started.

The private nature of that walk exposes a great deal of counterfeit spirituality. Anybody can appear devoted when the lights are on. The real examination begins when nobody is applauding. How does a man speak to his wife? What does he watch when he is alone? What occupies his mind when there is no sermon playing? What happens when somebody crosses him, cheats him, ignores him, corrects him, or refuses to admire him? That is where the walk shows up. Proverbs 20:11 says, “Even a child is known by his doings,” and grown Christians do not receive an exemption. The greatest proof of spiritual power is not that a man can make a room react to him. It is that the Holy Ghost can make the man react rightly to God. A fellow may shout until the rafters shake and still have a tongue at home sharp enough to peel paint. Noise travels through walls. Character follows you through the door. Walking in the Spirit means God has authority when the congregation cannot see you.

## **2. The Holy Ghost Came to Glorify Christ, Not the Christian**

Jesus Christ gave one of the clearest descriptions of the Holy Ghost's ministry in John 16:13–14: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth... He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Notice the direction. The Spirit glorifies Christ. He does not spend His ministry making the believer fascinated with the believer. Genuine spiritual work turns attention toward Jesus Christ, His word, His cross, His resurrection, His truth, and His authority. Counterfeit religion continually turns the camera back toward the performer. What did he feel? What did she experience? What did somebody see? What private message did somebody supposedly receive? Before long Christ is standing outside the religious carnival while everybody inside is comparing supernatural stories. The Holy Ghost is not running a talent show for the flesh. When He works, Jesus Christ gets larger in a believer's estimation, Scripture becomes more authoritative, sin becomes more hateful, and obedience becomes more important.

That principle immediately gives us a measuring stick for religious experiences. If an experience makes a man more impressed with himself than with Christ, something is wrong. If it creates spiritual celebrities who are supposedly able to dispense anointing like merchants handing out samples, something is wrong. If the Bible becomes secondary to what somebody felt, saw, dreamed, heard, or imagined, something is wrong. The Spirit of truth does not compete with the truth He inspired. Religious flesh, however, loves novelty. The Bible sitting on the table seems too plain, so the flesh wants heaven to send a private memo with the recipient's name embossed across the top. Apparently sixty-six books are not enough when somebody wants to feel important. But the mature believer does not need God to whisper something contrary to what He has already thundered in Scripture. Walking in the Spirit means honoring what the Holy Ghost has written, not treating the written word as the appetizer before the really exciting private revelation arrives.

The Holy Ghost and the word of God are never enemies. Ephesians 6:17 calls Scripture "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." That sword is not imaginary, mystical, or hidden behind somebody's personal impressions. It is written. It has chapters and verses. You can read it at three in the morning when no preacher is available, and it says the same thing at noon. That stability is a blessing. A Christian governed by Scripture does not have to chase every new religious sensation through town like a dog chasing passing cars. The Spirit teaches through the Book, brings truth to remembrance, illuminates the believer's understanding, convicts through what God has spoken, and applies divine truth to the life. When a man walks in the Spirit, his relationship with the Bible deepens because he is submitting to the Author. The Christian who claims great devotion to the Holy Ghost while ignoring Scripture is like a man claiming loyalty to an author whose book he refuses to read.

### **3. The Spirit and the Flesh Are at War**

Galatians 5:17 explains the battle plainly: “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other.” Contrary means contrary. God did not say the flesh needed encouragement, better self-esteem, a fresh environment, or a religious makeover. The flesh is opposed to the Spirit. That opposition continues in the saved man because salvation does not eradicate the old nature. The believer receives a new nature and the indwelling Holy Ghost, but the flesh remains ready to resume command whenever it is given the opportunity. That is why a Christian can be saved and still sin. It is also why walking in the Spirit is necessary. If the flesh disappeared at conversion, Galatians 5:16 would be unnecessary. You do not command a dead enemy to be resisted. The command exists because the conflict is real. Every Christian carries a battlefield around in his own body, and some of the fiercest wars he will ever fight take place where nobody else can hear the gunfire.

The works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19–21 make ugly reading, and they should. Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings—God does not perfume the old nature before describing it. But notice that the flesh is capable of religious activity as well as sensual activity. Idolatry and heresies sit in the same list as drunkenness and uncleanness. The flesh can wreck a nightclub, but it can also wreck a church. It can chase a bottle, but it can also chase a title. It can lust after a woman, or it can lust after recognition. A man can be fleshly while standing behind a sacred desk, especially if the sacred desk has become a stage for himself. Walking in the Spirit is not merely avoiding obvious scandal. It means refusing the old nature every throne it tries to occupy, including the religious ones.

Nor does walking in the Spirit mean sinless perfection. Paul does not say the flesh ceases to exist; he says, “ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” The lust is present, but it does not have to be obeyed. Temptation is not the same thing as surrender. The believer may feel anger rising and refuse to let it speak. He may encounter lust and turn away. He may feel pride demanding recognition and choose humility instead. He may want revenge and obey Romans 12 rather than his wounded ego. The Holy Ghost supplies power for obedience, but He does not remove the believer’s responsibility to yield. God did not design Christian living as spiritual autopilot. The Spirit leads; the believer is told to walk. The flesh makes its demand; the believer is told not to fulfil it. Victory does not consist in never hearing the old nature knock. Victory consists in refusing to open the door and invite the rascal in for supper.

#### **4. Being Filled With the Spirit Means Being Under His Control**

Ephesians 5:18 says, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.” The comparison itself explains a great deal. Alcohol controls a drunk man. It affects his speech, judgment, movement, decisions, and behavior. Paul contrasts that control with being filled with the Spirit. The issue is influence and government. Every saved believer in this present Church Age is indwelt and sealed by the Holy Ghost. Ephesians 1:13 says, “after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.” Filling therefore is not getting a missing piece of the Holy Ghost as though God mailed Him in installments. It is the believer yielding practical control to the Spirit already dwelling within him. The question is not how much of the Holy Ghost you possess. The question is how much of your life you are withholding from His authority. God does not need more room because He is small. He needs more room because the Christian is stubborn.

The verses following Ephesians 5:18 are remarkably inconvenient for people who want Spirit-filling to mean uncontrolled religious frenzy. Paul immediately speaks of “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” “giving thanks always,” and “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God” (Ephesians 5:19–21). That is not chaos. That is ordered Christian conduct. Spirit-filling affects worship, gratitude, humility, marriage, the home, and relationships. The passage continues into instruction for wives, husbands, children, fathers, servants, and masters. Apparently the Holy Ghost is interested in whether a husband loves his wife after the revival meeting. Imagine that. Religion would rather measure spirituality by what happened during three loud minutes near the altar. God keeps reading into chapter 6 and asks how you treated everybody after you got home. The Spirit-filled life is not confined to a sanctuary. If the experience cannot survive the drive home, the dishes, the children, the bills, and a disagreement, it was not much of a walk.

First Corinthians 14 gives another needed correction. That chapter deals with spiritual gifts, tongues, prophecy, speaking in the assembly, and interpretation, yet Paul insists, “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40). Earlier he says, “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace” (1 Corinthians 14:33). Biblical spiritual activity therefore does not require disorder as proof of authenticity. In Acts 2 the tongues were identifiable languages: “every man heard them speak in his own language” (Acts 2:6). In Corinth, uninterpreted speech was restricted, not celebrated. God gave rules. Modern religious flesh often treats rules as evidence that the Spirit has been restrained, as though the Holy Ghost forgot to read His own instructions. But the Spirit who inspired 1 Corinthians 14 is perfectly capable of operating within 1 Corinthians 14. Divine power and divine order are not opposites. The Almighty does not need confusion to prove He entered the building.

## **5. Being Led by the Spirit Does Not Mean Following Every Impression**

Romans 8:14 says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” That verse is often quoted as though being led by the Spirit means receiving a continuous stream of private instructions about every ordinary decision. But read the context. Verse 13 says, “if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” The leading of the Spirit in the passage is directly connected with refusing the flesh and living as a child of God. He leads toward holiness, not self-importance. He leads a believer away from sin, into obedience, toward Christ, through truth. If a supposed leading excuses disobedience, contradicts Scripture, feeds pride, destroys responsibility, or permits what God forbids, it did not originate with the Holy Ghost. God does not lead a Christian into a ditch and then blame the Bible for putting the guardrail in his way.

This is why the written word must judge subjective impressions rather than subjective impressions judging the written word. A man says, “I feel led.” Fine. Led where? By what? According to which Scripture? The phrase “God told me” has been used to baptize more foolishness than some people would like to admit. God supposedly tells one person to marry somebody else’s spouse, another to abandon his responsibilities, another to start a ministry nobody asked for, and another to announce the date of an event Scripture says no man knows. Then, when the prediction collapses like a cheap lawn chair, the prophet quietly updates the revelation. The Bible does not need updates. “For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven” (Psalm 119:89). Walking in the Spirit produces increasing submission to settled truth. The mature believer becomes less interested in impressive claims and more interested in whether the claim survives contact with the Book.

None of that means God cannot direct circumstances, burden a believer to pray, use biblical wisdom, close doors, open opportunities, or lead through providence. He can and does. But providential leading never grants permission to disobey explicit Scripture. Colossians 3:15 says, “let the peace of God rule in your hearts,” while Colossians 3:16 immediately says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.” Peace and the word belong together. Biblical guidance is not superstition dressed in church clothes. A Christian should pray, seek wisdom, examine motives, compare everything with Scripture, and then act responsibly. Sometimes God’s will is not hidden at all. The believer asking whether he should forgive does not need three signs and a dream; Ephesians 4:32 already answered him. Much confusion about God’s leading disappears when a man quits demanding new instructions and begins obeying the ones already printed in front of him.

## **6. The Fruit of the Spirit Is Harder to Fake Than a Performance**

Galatians 5:22–23 gives the Spirit’s fruit: “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance.” That list is devastating to religious showmanship because none of those qualities requires a stage. A man can display them in traffic. A

woman can display them while dealing with an irritating person. A husband can display them during disagreement. A church member can display them when overlooked. A worker can display them when treated unfairly. Temperance is particularly inconvenient to any spirituality built around losing control, because the word itself points toward self-government under God. The Holy Ghost does not produce a believer who is helpless before every emotional impulse. He strengthens him to bring conduct under divine authority. Fruit grows quietly, but it reveals the health of the tree. You can tape plastic apples onto dead branches and fool somebody at a distance, but eventually somebody is going to take a bite and discover there was never any life in the thing.

The home is one of the finest orchards for examining spiritual fruit because family members know whether the apples are real. A man may be patient with strangers because strangers can leave. His wife knows whether longsuffering survives after supper. A woman may speak gently at church while carrying enough bitterness home to pickle vegetables. A child may learn religious vocabulary while still displaying rebellion whenever authority interrupts his pleasure. God is not deceived by polished public behavior. The Spirit's work reaches the tongue, temper, attitudes, reactions, and habits. James 3:17 describes wisdom from above as "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits." Real spirituality does not merely look impressive in favorable conditions. It continues producing under pressure. Anybody can claim peace while getting his own way. Let somebody cross him, correct him, or deny him something, and the harvest becomes visible. Pressure does not create the contents; it squeezes them out.

The Corinthian church proves why gifts cannot be the primary measure of maturity. First Corinthians 1:7 says they came "behind in no gift," yet Paul tells them in 1 Corinthians 3:1 that he could not speak unto them "as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." Gifted and carnal. That combination ought to ruin the theology that treats supernatural manifestation as automatic proof of spiritual maturity. A man can possess ability without possessing character. He can preach and be proud. He can teach and be bitter. He can sing and be immoral. God can use a gift while the individual mishandles his walk. Fruit is different because fruit reveals what is governing the life. The Spirit-filled Christian is not merely useful before an audience; he is being changed before God. Gifts may draw attention. Fruit survives inspection. The flesh wants something spectacular enough to make people stare. The Holy Ghost produces something solid enough to make Christ visible.

## **7. Do Not Grieve the Spirit You Claim to Follow**

Ephesians 4:30 commands, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." That one verse holds security and responsibility together

beautifully. The believer is sealed unto the day of redemption, yet he can grieve the Spirit who sealed him. Eternal security does not turn sin into a harmless hobby. The context explains what grieves Him: lying, corrupt communication, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, malice, and an unforgiving spirit. Again, notice how painfully ordinary the list is. Paul does not tell the Ephesians that the greatest danger is failing to have enough dramatic experiences. He tells them to watch their mouths and attitudes. The Holy Ghost is concerned about what comes out of a Christian when somebody irritates him. A believer can sing about being Spirit-filled and then grieve that same Spirit before reaching the parking lot by shredding another Christian with his tongue. Heaven is not fooled by the soundtrack.

First Thessalonians 5:19 gives the equally direct command, “Quench not the Spirit.” But the following verses immediately provide balance: “Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:20–21). Notice both sides. Do not quench, but prove. Biblical spirituality is neither cynical rejection of everything supernatural nor gullible acceptance of every religious claim. God says test it. Truth can survive examination. Counterfeit religion gets nervous when somebody reaches for a Bible because a Bible has a nasty habit of checking identification at the door. “Prove all things” means believers are not required to surrender judgment merely because someone raises his voice and inserts “Thus saith the Lord” before an opinion. The Spirit of truth welcomes truth. Walking in the Spirit requires sensitivity to God and suspicion toward the flesh, including our own flesh. Discernment is not quenching the Spirit. Refusing Scripture because it interferes with an experience is.

So how does a believer avoid grieving and quenching the Spirit? By responding when God’s word exposes something. Confess sin rather than defending it. Forsake what Scripture condemns. Obey what Scripture commands. Forgive where God commands forgiveness. Speak truth when lying would protect your pride. Refuse bitterness before it sets concrete around the heart. Keep short accounts with God. Yield instead of resisting. Romans 6:13 says, “yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” There is the practical machinery of the Spirit-governed life. Your eyes, ears, mouth, hands, feet, mind, and body become instruments surrendered to God. Walking in the Spirit is not mysterious because God enjoys hiding Christianity from ordinary believers. It is demanding because the flesh hates yielding. The difficulty is not discovering what God wants. Most of the time the difficulty is that we discovered it and the old nature filed an objection.

## **Conclusion**

When the religious smoke clears, Galatians 5:16 remains wonderfully plain: “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” That command places spirituality where it belongs—in the daily conduct of a saved person living under the authority of God. The great test is not what happens when the music rises but what happens when temptation rises. Not whether somebody fell on a floor but whether pride fell when Scripture rebuked it. Not whether a person spoke words nobody understood but whether he controlled the words everybody understood. Not whether hands went into the air during worship but whether those hands remained clean afterward. The Holy Ghost does not need theater to demonstrate His power. He demonstrated enough power by inspiring a perfect Book, convicting sinners, regenerating believers, sealing them unto redemption, illuminating truth, producing fruit, and conforming Christians to Christ. If that is not exciting enough, the problem is not that the Spirit lacks power. The problem is that the flesh has developed an appetite for spectacle.

The Spirit-filled life will often look unimpressive to a world trained to admire performance. A man quietly keeping his word, resisting lust, loving his wife, raising his children in truth, forgiving an enemy, controlling his temper, reading his Bible, praying faithfully, serving without applause, giving without advertising it, and standing for doctrine without compromise will not always attract a crowd. Heaven notices. That man is fighting battles no camera records. Every time he says no to the flesh and yes to Scripture, the Holy Ghost is accomplishing something infinitely more valuable than a religious exhibition. Christ is gaining practical ground in a life He already purchased with His blood. Walking in the Spirit is Christ being manifested not by theatrical imitation but by obedient transformation. The flesh loves spotlights because spotlights make it visible. The Spirit glorifies Christ, and He is perfectly content to do some of His finest work where only God can see it.

That is where this series must begin. Before discussing spiritual thinking, yielding, mortifying the deeds of the body, fruit, prayer, unity, service, grieving, or quenching, the foundation has to be settled. The Holy Ghost is not a religious entertainer. He is not spiritual electricity waiting for somebody to work the crowd into the correct voltage. He is not a private oracle assigned to flatter personal desires. He is God. He indwells the believer, points to Jesus Christ, honors the word He inspired, wars against the flesh, produces holiness, and demands obedience. Walking in the Spirit means placing the next step under His authority, then the next one, then the next one after that. It means Christ gaining control where self once occupied the throne. You do not prove the Holy Ghost has control by how dramatically you lose control of yourself. You prove it by how faithfully your life comes under the control of the truth He wrote.

## **2 of 10 — Walking in the Spirit — Two Masters Inside the House: The War Between the Flesh and the Spirit**

**Key Passage: “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” (Galatians 5:17)**

Every saved man carries an enemy to church with him, takes him home afterward, feeds him three meals a day, puts him to bed every night, and wakes up with him every morning. That enemy is not the devil, although the devil knows how to use him. It is not the world, although the world knows how to advertise to him. It is the flesh. Galatians 5:17 does not say the flesh occasionally disagrees with the Spirit; it says they “are contrary the one to the other.” There is a standing war inside the believer. Salvation did not put rouge on Adam’s old corpse and teach him hymn numbers. God did not reform the flesh, baptize it, educate it, send it to seminary, or give it a better vocabulary. The flesh remained what it was before conversion: fallen, self-centered, God-resistant, pleasure-hungry, proud, and perfectly willing to wear religious clothes when religion serves its interests.

That conflict belongs especially to the saved man because the lost man does not possess the indwelling Holy Ghost. Romans 8:9 says, “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” When a sinner trusts Jesus Christ in this present Church Age, he is saved by grace through faith, placed in Christ, indwelt by the Spirit, and sealed “unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30). But God does not immediately remove the old body or eradicate the old nature. Instead, the believer now possesses divine life while still carrying flesh that remembers every old road home. Before salvation, there was no civil war because the old king had the whole country. After salvation, another government is present. The Holy Ghost has moved in, and the old tenant discovers that he no longer owns the property. That is when the shooting starts. The conflict is not evidence that salvation failed. It is evidence that something new is there to oppose what once ruled without resistance.

The Christian life therefore cannot be understood by pretending that conversion ends temptation or makes the flesh harmless. That false idea produces either pride or despair. The proud fellow imagines he has reached some spiritual plateau where the old nature no longer matters, and the despairing fellow feels temptation and concludes he must never have been saved. The Bible corrects both. Paul says the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. There is opposition. There is tension. There are desires pulling in opposite directions. But there is also power for victory. The saved man is not required to obey the flesh merely because the flesh shouts loudly. The flesh is a defeated claimant still filing appeals. It has desires, but it does not possess rightful authority. Walking in the Spirit

begins when the believer quits treating the old nature like a misunderstood guest and starts recognizing it as an enemy that would gladly repossess the whole house.

## **1. The Old Man Did Not Get Saved**

Romans 6:6 says, “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” Notice the language carefully. God does not rehabilitate the old man; He identifies him with the crucifixion of Christ. The old man is not given a correspondence course in moral improvement. He is condemned. That tells you what God thinks of human nature without Christ. Modern religion spends fortunes polishing what God sentenced to a cross. It tells the flesh to discover itself, celebrate itself, believe in itself, improve itself, and finally give itself a participation trophy. God says, “crucified.” That is a fairly decisive evaluation. Christianity is not God helping Adam become a better Adam. It is God giving a sinner new life in Christ while declaring the old nature worthy of death. The old man may wear a tie, quote a verse, and learn religious manners, but a dressed-up rebel is still a rebel.

Ephesians 4:22 tells the believer to “put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.” There is no suggestion that the old man gradually becomes trustworthy if you take him to enough Bible conferences. He is “corrupt.” His lusts are “deceitful.” The flesh does not merely desire wrong things; it lies about what those things will do for you. Lust promises satisfaction and leaves chains. Pride promises dignity and produces blindness. Anger promises justice and frequently delivers foolishness. Covetousness promises security and makes a man servant to possessions. The flesh is a salesman who never shows the customer the back page of the contract. Proverbs says, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12). The flesh specializes in things that “seemeth right.” It can make poison look like medicine and rebellion sound like self-respect.

Colossians 3:9–10 gives the corresponding truth: “seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man.” There are two contrary principles operating in the believer’s experience. The new man delights in what honors God; the flesh pulls toward what gratifies self. Salvation creates no peace treaty between them. God never tells the new man to compromise with the old man for the sake of inner unity. You cannot form a coalition government between holiness and sin. The flesh would sign the agreement, smile for the photograph, and steal the treasury before sunrise. The proper relationship is conflict. Romans 13:14 says, “put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” Do not stock its pantry. Do not hand it ammunition. Do not keep emergency supplies available for your favorite sin. Starve the traitor instead of building him a guest room.

## **2. Romans 7 Is a Battlefield, Not a Biography of Defeat**

Romans 7 contains one of the most honest descriptions of the believer's internal struggle in all Scripture. Paul says, "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I" (Romans 7:15). That is not the testimony of a man who loves sin and wants an excuse. It is the testimony of a man who hates what the flesh produces and recognizes a conflict within himself. He continues, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7:18). Paul even inserts the parenthesis so no theologian needs to rescue him from his own sentence. "In my flesh" there is no good thing. That statement ruins every religious program built on perfecting human nature. You can perfume flesh, educate flesh, restrain flesh, and teach flesh to behave in public. God still refuses to certify it as good.

Paul then identifies the competing principles: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members" (Romans 7:22–23). The inward man delights in God. The members contain another law pulling toward sin. This explains why a genuine Christian can love the Bible and still feel temptation, desire holiness and still battle lust, pray sincerely and later discover anger boiling up, worship God and still wrestle with pride. The existence of battle does not prove hypocrisy. Surrender to the enemy while pretending there is no battle may prove plenty, but the battle itself is normal Christian experience. A dead man does not wrestle. A lost man may experience conscience, guilt, fear, or moral conflict, but Romans 7 describes something deeper: an inward man delighting in God while another law wars in the members. Salvation did not abolish combat; it gave the believer a side worth fighting for.

Yet Romans 7 does not end with Paul lying face-down in the trench waving a white flag. He cries, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and immediately answers, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:24–25). Then comes Romans 8: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The answer is not self-confidence but Christ. The victory is not produced by pretending the flesh is gone but by recognizing that the believer's standing is in Christ and his power comes through the Spirit. Romans 8:2 speaks of "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." The Christian who tries to defeat flesh by flesh is asking one thief to guard another thief. Discipline matters, but discipline must operate under spiritual truth. Willpower alone can restrain behavior; only the Spirit of God can govern the walk.

## **3. The Flesh Has Appetites, and It Never Says "Enough"**

Galatians 5:16 says, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." The flesh has lusts—strong desires seeking satisfaction. Those lusts are broader than sexual sin. The

flesh lusts for recognition, comfort, revenge, ease, attention, possessions, control, praise, food, entertainment, dominance, and whatever else places self on the throne. It can lust for applause in a church as easily as pleasure in a bar. That is why a man can give up one obvious vice and still remain thoroughly fleshly. Pride can congratulate him for overcoming drunkenness. Vanity can boast about his modesty. Self-righteousness can grow fat on his religious discipline. The flesh is remarkably adaptable. Shut down the tavern and it may open a religious bookstore. Take away its filthy vocabulary and it will learn theological terms. Its chief objective is not always sensuality. Its chief objective is self-rule.

James 1:14–15 explains the mechanics of temptation: “every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.” The bait works because something inside wants what is being offered. Satan may cast the hook, and the world may decorate it, but the flesh supplies the appetite. A fisherman does not bait a hook with something the fish despises. Temptation presents what corresponds to desire. That is why merely blaming the devil becomes childish. The devil did not force Adam to eat, David to take Bathsheba, or Peter to boast. Scripture repeatedly places moral responsibility on the person who yields. The devil is real, spiritual warfare is real, but you do not need a demon behind every cookie jar when gluttony already knows where the kitchen is. Some Christians rebuke Satan for temptations their own flesh has been ordering by mail for years. The first battlefield is nearer than that. It is inside the gate.

The flesh also has a terrible memory. Old sins can awaken after years of dormancy because the old nature never became holy. Paul tells Timothy, “Flee also youthful lusts” (2 Timothy 2:22), not “outgrow them automatically.” Age can weaken the body without sanctifying the flesh. An old sinner can carry young lusts in an aging frame. That is why Christians must never become casual about temptations simply because they have enjoyed years of victory. First Corinthians 10:12 warns, “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” Yesterday’s victory is not today’s permission to stroll through the minefield barefoot. The flesh will wait. It will sleep under the porch like an old snake and move when the weather warms. Walking in the Spirit requires continual vigilance because the enemy within never signs retirement papers. He remains flesh until redemption changes this vile body.

#### **4. Stop Feeding the Enemy You Claim to Be Fighting**

Romans 13:14 contains one of the simplest commands for practical victory: “make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” Provision means preparation. You cannot sincerely pray for victory while setting the table for defeat. If a man knows certain images stir lust, he has no business storing them on his phone and then asking God for purity. If someone knows a conversation consistently turns into gossip, he should not keep pulling

up a chair and acting surprised when somebody's reputation gets carved up for supper. If anger explodes under certain circumstances, wisdom removes unnecessary fuel. Christians sometimes ask God to deliver them from what they continue scheduling, purchasing, downloading, inviting, and protecting. Then they wonder why the flesh is strong. Feed a stray dog every night and he will be waiting at the back door tomorrow. Feed the flesh every day and do not act shocked when it learns your address.

This principle applies especially to the mind. Romans 8:5 says, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." What occupies the mind feeds one side of the conflict. The believer cannot pour hours of filth, vanity, covetousness, foolishness, sensuality, and unbelief into his mind and expect a thirty-minute sermon to disinfect the whole building. The word of God is not spiritual mouthwash used after a week of eating garbage. Psalm 119:11 says, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Colossians 3:16 says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." Richly means more than occasionally. A Bible that lives in the glove compartment will not do much fighting in the mind. The sword of the Spirit works better in the hand than framed on the wall.

The world understands appetite better than many Christians do. Advertisers repeat images because repetition cultivates desire. Entertainment normalizes conduct by displaying it until the conscience quits flinching. Music can attach emotion to rebellion. Social approval can make wickedness appear ordinary. The flesh loves the arrangement because it receives constant reinforcement. Then someone says holiness is difficult, as though watering weeds twelve hours a day and flowers five minutes a week produced an agricultural mystery. Galatians 6:8 states the law plainly: "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." Seed goes somewhere. Time goes somewhere. Attention goes somewhere. Eyes and ears are gates. Walking in the Spirit does not require hiding from civilization, but it does require enough biblical sense to quit furnishing the enemy. You cannot starve the flesh while spoon-feeding it, and you cannot cultivate spiritual strength while treating Scripture like a vitamin taken when symptoms appear.

## **5. The Flesh Wants the Driver's Seat, Not Merely a Ride**

Romans 6:12 says, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." The word "reign" is governmental language. Sin wants a throne. The flesh is not satisfied to make suggestions from the back seat; it wants the wheel. It wants to determine where you go, what you say, what you watch, how you respond, what you desire, and whose authority you recognize. Paul says, "Let not." That means the believer has responsibility in the matter. Sin remains present, but it need not reign. A dethroned king may still issue proclamations; nobody is obligated to obey them. The flesh says, "Get

angry.” You can refuse. It says, “Take another look.” You can turn away. It says, “You deserve revenge.” You can obey God instead. Desire is not lordship. Temptation is not authority. The old nature makes demands with a crown God has already knocked off its head.

Romans 6:13 continues, “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God.” Yielding is the hinge. Your body becomes an instrument in someone’s service. The tongue can bless God or slice people apart. The eyes can read Scripture or feast on corruption. The hands can serve or steal. The feet can carry you toward righteousness or toward temptation. The mind can meditate on truth or rehearse bitterness until resentment becomes a full-time occupation. The members are instruments; the question is who gets them. A piano does not decide which song to play. Somebody sits at the keys. The flesh has been banging on those keys since Adam, and it knows every filthy tune in the book. Walking in the Spirit means yielding the instrument to God. The Holy Ghost is not interested in borrowing Sunday morning while the flesh retains the lease on the other six days.

This is where excuses must die. “That is just how I am” is not a Christian defense for disobedience. Maybe that is how your flesh is. God already told you what He thinks of your flesh. Some men are naturally hot-tempered, some naturally fearful, some naturally lustful, some naturally proud, some naturally lazy, and some naturally controlling. Natural does not mean righteous. Poison ivy is natural too. The Christian life does not consist of baptizing personality defects and calling them authenticity. Second Corinthians 5:17 says, “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” The believer’s identity is not chained to every inherited tendency and lifelong habit. Grace does not merely forgive the past; it establishes a new relationship to sin’s authority. The flesh may shout, “This is who you are.” Scripture answers, “Ye are not your own” (1 Corinthians 6:19). That settles the ownership dispute.

## **6. The Spirit Does Not Negotiate With the Flesh**

Galatians 5 does not describe a partnership but opposition. “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” They do not meet halfway. Holiness does not compromise with lust until both parties feel heard. Truth does not negotiate with lying. Charity does not form a committee with envy. Temperance does not ask drunkenness for a reasonable amendment. The flesh must be denied. Jesus said, in a broader discipleship context, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself” (Matthew 16:24). Self-denial is foreign to a culture that treats every appetite like a constitutional right. The Bible assumes that some desires should be refused precisely because they are wrong. Not understood, celebrated, renamed, and accommodated—refused. The old nature considers that cruel because the old nature considers itself god. But a Christian who never says no to himself will eventually say no to God. One throne cannot hold two sovereigns.

Romans 8:13 says, “if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” Mortify means the deeds of the body do not receive tender rehabilitation. They are put to death. Notice, however, “through the Spirit.” Biblical mortification is not monastic self-punishment, starvation, ritual suffering, or an attempt to earn favor with God. Salvation is settled in Christ. The believer fights from acceptance, not for acceptance. But grace does not turn sin into a pet. Titus 2:11–12 says the grace of God teaches us, “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts.” Grace teaches denial. That will surprise people who have turned grace into a hammock for the flesh. Biblical grace saves freely and then teaches the saved man to say no. Cheap religion says, “God understands,” when it means, “Keep feeding the sin.” The Holy Ghost understands perfectly—and tells you to kill the deed instead of composing an apology for it.

The practical method is neither mysterious nor magical. When temptation comes, bring truth to bear immediately. Do not sit down with lust for an interview. Joseph fled from Potiphar’s wife (Genesis 39:12). Paul told Timothy, “Flee youthful lusts” (2 Timothy 2:22). Sometimes the most spiritual thing a man can do is leave the room, shut the screen, end the conversation, cancel the contact, or walk away. The flesh likes prolonged negotiations because every extra minute gives desire time to hire an attorney. Scripture often says flee. There is no medal for seeing how close you can stand to the fire without smelling like smoke. At other times the battle requires standing, resisting, praying, quoting Scripture, or redirecting the mind. But the principle remains: do not entertain what God told you to deny. Temptation grows in conversation. Obedience often begins with a door slamming before the flesh finishes its sales pitch.

## **7. Victory Is a Walk, Not a Funeral for the Flesh**

One of the great mistakes in Christian teaching is promising believers an experience after which the flesh will never trouble them again. Scripture promises no such funeral before glorification. Philippians 3:21 says the Lord Jesus Christ “shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” That change is future. First Corinthians 15 speaks of corruption putting on incorruption and mortality putting on immortality. Until then, believers walk in mortal bodies where the flesh remains a problem. The answer is not sinless perfection but spiritual dependence. A man who thinks the flesh is gone is in more danger than a man who knows where the snake is. Pride is happiest when it convinces you that pride has died. The believer should expect conflict without accepting defeat as normal. Battle is normal. Capitulation is not. God provides sufficient truth, grace, and spiritual power for the next act of obedience.

Galatians 5:25 says, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” Life precedes walk. The believer does not walk in the Spirit to obtain eternal life; he walks because he

possesses life in Christ. That preserves grace and responsibility in proper order. Works do not save, but saved people are commanded to walk. Obedience does not keep a Christian eternally secure; the Spirit seals him unto redemption. Yet that security does not make his conduct irrelevant. It makes obedience reasonable. Romans 12:1 calls presenting the body a living sacrifice our “reasonable service.” Grace is not God lowering the standard because salvation was free. Grace provides a secure standing from which the believer can fight without wondering whether every stumble has erased Calvary. When he sins, he confesses and gets back in the fight. He does not rebuild salvation from the foundation every Tuesday. Christ finished that work once.

Daily victory therefore often looks less spectacular than people expect. It is a thousand small refusals and obediences that never make a testimony video. The believer controls his tongue during an argument. He refuses a lustful image. He gives thanks instead of complaining. He forgives before bitterness settles in. He tells the truth when lying would save embarrassment. He opens Scripture before feeding on the world. He prays instead of nursing resentment. He gives rather than hoards. He serves when nobody notices. Those acts seem ordinary, but ordinary obedience is where wars are won. Armies do not win because one soldier gives an impressive speech about battle while polishing his medals. They win ground by ground. The flesh wants either indulgence or dramatic religion; both keep attention on self. The Spirit leads toward Christlike obedience. Every yielded step tells the old nature, “You still live here, but you no longer own the house.”

## **Conclusion**

The war between flesh and Spirit explains much of the Christian experience that otherwise confuses people. Why can a saved man feel desires he hates? Because the flesh remains. Why does Scripture command believers to mortify, deny, flee, resist, put off, put on, yield, and walk? Because the conflict is real. Why can a believer possess eternal life and still behave carnally? Because position in Christ does not eliminate the need for practical obedience. None of this undermines salvation by grace. It proves the precision of the Bible. God tells the Christian exactly what is inside him and exactly where the struggle lies. The flesh was not improved at conversion, and the Holy Ghost did not move in to become its adviser. They are contrary. The believer does not need to be shocked by the conflict, but neither should he make peace with the enemy. You cannot stop the flesh from filing complaints, but you can stop handing it the keys.

The answer is not obsession with the flesh either. Some Christians spend so much time examining themselves that they eventually make self the center of their religion from the opposite direction. The goal is not continual fascination with your corruption; it is continual dependence upon Jesus Christ and submission to the Holy Ghost through the word of God.

Romans 8 turns the eyes away from the wretchedness of Romans 7 and toward “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” Colossians 3 says, “Set your affection on things above.” Hebrews 12 says, “Looking unto Jesus.” Victory comes when Christ occupies the attention, Scripture governs the mind, and the believer refuses to make provision for the flesh. You do not defeat darkness by spending all night studying darkness. Turn on the light. The old man deserves no admiration, no negotiation, and no throne. Keep him where Calvary put him: under the sentence of death.

Every morning the house wakes up with two contrary influences inside it. The flesh wants comfort, applause, indulgence, control, and immediate satisfaction. The Spirit points toward truth, holiness, charity, temperance, faith, and Jesus Christ. One says, “Serve yourself.” The other leads according to the word of God. One says, “You deserve it.” Scripture says, “ye are bought with a price.” One says, “Nobody will know.” God says, “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:13). One says, “Just this once.” Wisdom remembers that chains are forged one link at a time. Walking in the Spirit means deciding which voice receives obedience. The flesh may live in the house until redemption day, but it does not have to run the house. Christ bought the property, the Holy Ghost occupies it, and the old tenant has no business sitting on the throne.

### **3 of 10 — Walking in the Spirit — The Mind Is the Battlefield: Carnal Thinking Versus Spiritual Thinking**

**Key Passage: “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after 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, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Romans 8:5–8)**

Romans 8 puts its finger on the battlefield before modern religion has time to build a stage over it. “They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.” There it is. Before the sin reaches the hand, the mouth, the feet, or the body, it has usually been given lodging upstairs. The mind is not a neutral waiting room where any thought can sit indefinitely without consequence. It is territory. Something is being entertained, rehearsed, admired, feared, coveted, resented, believed, or remembered. A Christian may carry a King James Bible big enough to stop a door, sit through three services a week, know when to say “Amen,” and still spend the rest of his waking hours feeding his mind the world’s sewage.

Then he wonders why carnality keeps leaking through the plumbing. God is not mysterious about this. “To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” What occupies the mind eventually governs the walk.

The mind matters because the flesh does not begin every rebellion by kicking down the front door. Sometimes it simply asks for a chair. One thought is entertained. One image is replayed. One grievance is reheated. One fantasy is polished. One fear is permitted to preach a sermon. One proud comparison is allowed to sit down and explain why everybody else is inferior. Given enough time, thoughts become appetites, appetites become choices, choices become habits, and habits begin masquerading as personality. Proverbs 23:7 says, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.” The Bible does not teach that every passing thought defines a man, but it certainly teaches that what a man habitually minds reveals what has his attention. The devil understands that. The world understands that. Advertisers understand it. Entertainers understand it. Political propagandists understand it. Somehow the fellow with a Bible is the last one to discover that what repeatedly enters the mind tends to come out in the life.

Walking in the Spirit therefore requires more than avoiding outward scandal. It requires governing what is allowed to settle in the mind. Romans 8:5 does not merely say spiritual people avoid certain acts; it says they “mind the things of the Spirit.” Colossians 3:2 commands, “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” Philippians 4:8 tells the believer what deserves sustained mental attention: things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and worthy of praise. That is not psychological self-help with a verse taped on it. It is spiritual warfare. The believer cannot control every thought that knocks, but he does not have to give every thought a bedroom, a key, and forwarding privileges. Birds may fly over the roof; you do not have to let them build a nest in the chimney. The mind is a battlefield because somebody is always trying to occupy it.

### **1. What You Mind Reveals What You Are Feeding**

Romans 8:5 divides the matter with uncomfortable simplicity: “they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.” The verb is not describing one accidental glance or one momentary temptation. It describes orientation. What occupies the mind? What draws it? Where does it naturally wander when nobody assigns it a subject? A flesh-fed mind returns to fleshly things because appetite follows diet. Feed a man sugar all day and vegetables will not thrill him at supper. Feed the mind vanity, sensuality, outrage, gossip, envy, entertainment, mockery, greed, and self-glorification from morning until night, and then do not act astonished when Scripture tastes plain. The problem is not that the Bible lacks flavor. The palate has been ruined. Psalm 119:103 says, “How sweet are thy words unto my

taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” Spiritual appetite grows by feeding spiritual truth. A starving soul can sit beside a full Bible while gorging the flesh.

This explains why outward separation alone cannot produce spirituality. A man can remove himself from obvious temptations and still carry an entire carnival in his imagination. Jesus Christ exposed that principle when He dealt with lust and hatred as matters that begin within. The believer may shut a door physically while mentally reopening it every night. He may avoid speaking bitterness while spending hours rehearsing imaginary arguments in which he always delivers the final devastating line. He may never steal a dollar while coveting another man’s success until envy has decorated the whole interior of his mind. Flesh does not require physical action to enjoy itself. It can feast on imagination. That is why Proverbs 4:23 says, “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” The issues come out because something went in and was permitted to remain. Guard duty begins before the enemy reaches the street.

There is also a religious form of carnal thinking. First Corinthians 3:1 tells us that saved people may be “carnal,” and Paul identifies envy, strife, and divisions among them. Those Corinthians possessed spiritual gifts, yet their minds were occupied with personalities, factions, comparisons, and status. One said, “I am of Paul”; another, “I am of Apollos.” The flesh can make doctrine into a weapon for self-exaltation just as easily as it can make money into an idol. A man may know ten theological systems and still be eaten alive by pride. He may win every argument and lose the mind of Christ. Carnality is not limited to filthy entertainment; sometimes it carries a Scofield Bible and knows exactly where to find the maps. The test is not merely what information fills the head but what spirit governs the thinking. Truth should humble a man before God, not furnish ammunition for self-worship.

## **2. The Carnal Mind Is Not Misunderstood; It Is Hostile**

Romans 8:7 does not flatter human nature: “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God.” Not confused. Not wounded. Not merely uninformed. Enmity. The Bible uses a hard word because the condition is hard. Fallen human nature does not simply need better suggestions; it resists divine authority. The next clause explains it: “for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” The carnal mind wants autonomy. It may tolerate religion as decoration, tradition, culture, morality, or social respectability, but let God command it and the smile disappears. Fallen man will gladly have a god who advises, inspires, affirms, and stays in his corner. The trouble begins when the God of the Bible says, “Thou shalt,” “Thou shalt not,” “Repent,” “Believe,” “Flee,” “Mortify,” “Submit,” and “Obey.” The carnal mind’s favorite doctrine is sovereignty—its own.

Verse 8 then says, “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” The doctrinal setting matters. Paul is describing the unsaved condition, and verse 9 immediately tells believers, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” A saved man may behave carnally, as the Corinthians plainly did, but his standing has changed. He is no longer “in the flesh” positionally if the Spirit of God dwells in him. That distinction protects both salvation by grace and practical Christian responsibility. The believer is not trying to think spiritually in order to become God’s child. He thinks spiritually because he has been made alive in Christ and indwelt by the Holy Ghost. Position comes first; walk follows. Confuse those two and you either turn obedience into works salvation or turn grace into permission for carnality. The Bible does neither.

The practical warning remains severe. Although the saved man is not “in the flesh” in the Romans 8:9 sense, he can still set his mind on fleshly things and reap misery from it. Galatians 6:8 says, “he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.” Salvation does not make poison nutritious. Grace does not make a filthy mind harmless. Eternal security means the believer is kept by God; it does not mean every thought he entertains becomes spiritually healthy. Put garbage into the mind long enough and garbage will eventually come out through the mouth, mood, choices, and priorities. A refrigerator can be legally yours and still be full of spoiled food. Ownership does not sanctify the contents. The believer belongs to Christ, which is precisely why he should stop storing what contradicts his new Master. “Ye are bought with a price” is not a slogan for a wall plaque. It is an ownership notice.

### **3. The World Is Always Preaching to Your Mind**

The world does not wait for Sunday morning to preach. It preaches from screens, songs, advertisements, conversations, headlines, entertainment, fashions, celebrities, classrooms, storefronts, and every glowing rectangle a man keeps within arm’s reach. Its sermon is remarkably consistent: satisfy yourself, advertise yourself, compare yourself, fear everything, desire everything, forgive nothing, buy more, look better, be noticed, trust your feelings, distrust God, and whatever you do, never let eternity interrupt the shopping. Romans 12:2 warns, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Conformity happens when pressure from the outside reshapes what is inside. The world does not need to drag a Christian into open apostasy in one afternoon. It can accomplish plenty by slowly teaching him what to admire, what to laugh at, what to envy, what to tolerate, and what to forget.

That is why entertainment cannot be treated as spiritually neutral simply because it calls itself entertainment. What a man repeatedly watches teaches him something about what is normal. What he repeatedly hears gives language to his desires. What he laughs at lowers

defenses. Psalm 101:3 says, “I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes.” That is embarrassingly plain. Modern man can develop a seven-paragraph explanation for why staring at wickedness for three hours is culturally necessary, but David disposed of the matter in eleven words. The issue is not living in a monastery or refusing to know anything about the world. The issue is voluntary mental diet. There is a difference between encountering evil in a fallen world and purchasing a front-row seat to watch it perform. You cannot continually invite filth into the living room of the mind and then complain that the curtains smell like smoke.

News, commentary, and endless controversy can become just as carnal as obvious sensuality. A believer can spend every waking hour irritated, alarmed, outraged, and obsessed with the latest wickedness until fear and anger become his devotional life. He knows every scandal and barely knows Philippians. He can identify every enemy of civilization but cannot remember what he read in Psalms that morning because he never got around to Psalms. The flesh enjoys outrage because outrage feels righteous while requiring no holiness. Psalm 2 already told you the heathen rage. God is not pacing heaven reading breaking-news alerts. The believer should understand the times without letting the times possess his mind. Isaiah 26:3 says, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.” A mind stayed on every crisis in the world will eventually resemble the crisis. A mind stayed on God remembers Who still sits above it.

#### **4. Thoughts Must Be Taken Captive Before They Take You Captive**

Second Corinthians 10:5 speaks of “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” That is military language. Thoughts are not all welcomed as honored guests; some are arrested at the border. The passage deals with spiritual warfare, imaginations, and things exalting themselves against the knowledge of God. False ideas build strongholds because ideas have consequences. Satan’s first recorded attack on mankind in Genesis 3 came through a question aimed at God’s word: “Yea, hath God said?” The serpent attacked Eve’s thinking before her hand ever reached for the fruit. He questioned God’s statement, contradicted God’s warning, distorted God’s motive, and redirected attention toward what was forbidden. The body followed the argument. That pattern has not changed much. Sin often begins when the mind accepts a lie about God, a lie about consequence, or a lie about what obedience is costing.

Taking thoughts captive means judging them by Scripture rather than treating mental activity as sovereign. A thought says, “God has forgotten you.” Scripture says, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5). A thought says, “You must have what you desire.” Scripture says, “godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Timothy 6:6). A thought says, “You have every right to hate that person.” Scripture says, “Be ye kind one to

another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another” (Ephesians 4:32). A thought says, “Nobody will know.” Scripture says, “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:13). Spiritual warfare is often that practical. The believer does not need incense, dramatic music, or a special vocabulary. He needs enough Bible in him to answer a liar before the liar rents office space.

The battle must be fought early because entertained thoughts gather momentum. James 1:14–15 shows lust conceiving and eventually bringing forth sin. Conception comes before birth. If the mind keeps feeding a temptation, the final act should surprise no one. A man does not suddenly commit adultery after faithfully guarding his eyes, his imagination, his correspondence, and his affections for ten years. Somewhere a gate was left open and defended when conviction told him to close it. Bitterness works the same way. Nobody wakes up one morning accidentally hating a brother. The mind has usually been running the grievance through the projector for months, editing the footage so self is innocent in every scene. Captivity must happen before coronation. Kill the thought when it is a seed instead of waiting until it has roots through the foundation. Sin is cheaper to stop at the thought than at the wreckage.

### **5. Philippians 4:8 Is a Filter, Not Wall Decoration**

Philippians 4:8 gives one of the clearest standards for disciplined Christian thinking: “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report.” Paul then adds, “if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Notice the command: “think.” The Christian mind is not to drift wherever cultural current carries it. It is directed. Truth comes first because a lie cannot become healthy merely by being pleasant. Honest and just thinking refuses distortion. Pure thinking rejects mental uncleanness. Lovely and good-report thinking refuses the soul-deforming habit of feeding continually on ugliness, scandal, slander, and corruption. The verse is not telling Christians to pretend evil does not exist. Paul wrote those words from a world filled with paganism, persecution, immorality, political corruption, and death. He simply refused to give darkness unlimited tenancy in his mind.

Truth is especially important because fear, lust, anger, and pride all thrive on lies. Fear says every possible disaster is about to happen. Lust says gratification will satisfy permanently. Anger says retaliation will restore peace. Pride says comparison can make you valuable. Envy says somebody else’s blessing diminished your own. Scripture exposes each fraud. Philippians 4:6–7 precedes verse 8 with prayer, supplication, thanksgiving, and the peace of God guarding “your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Then Paul tells you what to think about. Prayer and thought discipline belong together. A Christian cannot dump

anxiety before God and then spend the next five hours retrieving it from the trash. Thanksgiving reminds the mind what God has done. Scripture tells it what is true. Prayer places burdens where they belong. Spiritual thinking is not positive thinking; it is truthful thinking under divine authority.

This is where many believers sabotage their own peace. They ask God to quiet their hearts while mentally rehearsing everything calculated to disturb them. They pray for purity while feeding imagination with impurity. They pray for contentment while browsing other people's lives until envy has a full stomach. They pray for unity while replaying every offense in high definition. That is like praying for a clean house while backing a garbage truck through the front door. Philippians 4:8 requires deliberate replacement. The mind must be given better material. Memorize Scripture. Sing hymns with doctrinal content. Rehearse answered prayer. Remember God's promises in their proper context. Think on Christ. Count what is worthy rather than cataloging what irritates you. The flesh cannot be starved by leaving a vacuum. Empty minds do not remain empty long. Feed the mind truth until error has to stand in line for attention.

## **6. Set Your Affection Where Christ Is**

Colossians 3:1–2 says, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” Once again doctrine comes before duty. Paul does not tell believers to think heavenly thoughts so they can earn a place with Christ. He says they have been “risen with Christ,” therefore they should seek what corresponds to that position. Christian thinking flows from Christian identity. The believer's life is “hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). Heaven is not merely a future vacation destination; it is where the believer's Head is seated and where his citizenship belongs. If Christ is above, the mind should not crawl continually through the gutter as though nothing beyond earth exists. A heavenly position deserves a heavenly orientation.

“Set your affection” also shows intentionality. Affections do not always wander into the correct pasture by accident. Earth shouts. Heaven does not need to. Bills, bodies, schedules, possessions, ambitions, politics, entertainment, inconveniences, and appetites all demand immediate attention. Eternal things can be crowded out not only by wickedness but by ordinary things granted extraordinary importance. Martha's problem in Luke 10 was not that serving food was sinful. She was “cumbered about much serving” while Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. Necessary things can become tyrants when they occupy every inch of the mind. A Christian can spend his entire day solving earthly problems and never consciously remember he is one heartbeat closer to eternity.

The world says the urgent thing is always the important thing. Scripture says some things shouting now will not matter five minutes after the Rapture.

Setting affection above does not make a Christian useless below. It makes him more useful because earthly things are finally placed in proper proportion. A man who remembers eternity can work without worshipping his career. He can possess money without money possessing him. He can love family without making family an idol. He can suffer loss without believing the universe ended. He can serve without demanding recognition because heaven keeps better records than men do. Moses chose “rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” because he had “respect unto the recompence of the reward” (Hebrews 11:25–26). His thinking governed his choosing. Eternity made temporary pleasure look temporary. Carnal thinking magnifies the moment until it fills the sky. Spiritual thinking brings eternity into the room and suddenly the moment shrinks back to size.

## **7. A Renewed Mind Produces Spiritual Judgment**

Romans 12:2 connects a renewed mind with discernment: “that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Thinking biblically affects judgment. A carnal mind judges by appearance, convenience, popularity, emotion, profit, fear, and immediate gratification. A spiritually renewed mind asks what Scripture says, what honors Christ, what strengthens obedience, what serves eternity, and what corresponds to truth. Hebrews 5:14 describes mature believers “who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” Discernment is trained. Nobody becomes spiritually perceptive merely by growing older or sitting in church buildings for decades. A man can repeat the same shallow thinking for fifty years and simply become an elderly shallow thinker. Use matters. Scripture applied repeatedly sharpens judgment. The mind learns to recognize counterfeit because it has handled truth often enough to know the difference.

That renewed judgment changes how a believer sees temptation. The flesh sees pleasure; the renewed mind sees the hook beneath the bait. The flesh sees a chance to win an argument; the renewed mind sees pride preparing to burn a relationship. The flesh sees more possessions; the renewed mind asks whether covetousness is writing the shopping list. The flesh sees revenge; the renewed mind remembers Romans 12:19: “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” The flesh sees a shortcut; the renewed mind asks what obedience requires. Spiritual maturity does not mean temptation stops looking attractive. It means truth teaches the believer to see farther than the advertisement. Sin always prints the pleasure in large type and the consequences in letters small enough to require a magnifying glass. Scripture reads the fine print out loud.

A renewed mind also changes worship because true worship requires truth. John 4:24 says, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Worship is not switching off the mind so emotion can have the building. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:15, "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." Understanding belongs in worship. Doctrine feeds praise because you cannot properly praise a God you refuse to know. The more Scripture teaches the believer who God is, what Christ accomplished, what grace provided, what eternity holds, and what the Spirit is doing, the richer worship becomes. Empty repetition needs atmosphere to survive. Biblical worship can survive silence because truth supplies substance. A mind full of Scripture gives the heart something worth singing about. The Holy Ghost does not bypass understanding; He renews it and points it toward Christ.

## **Conclusion**

The mind is the battlefield because the direction of a life is often settled there long before anybody sees the outcome. Romans 8 does not allow the believer to treat thinking as spiritually irrelevant. "They that are after the Spirit" mind "the things of the Spirit." Philippians says, "think on these things." Colossians says, "Set your affection on things above." Second Corinthians says to bring "every thought to the obedience of Christ." Romans 12 says, "be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." God keeps returning to the same territory because the territory matters. What a man repeatedly thinks about affects what he loves, fears, desires, chooses, says, and eventually becomes known for. The feet generally follow the mind's map. If the map is drawn by the flesh and colored by the world, do not be surprised when the traveler ends up somewhere Scripture told him not to go.

That means Christians must stop acting as though mental diet has no consequences. You cannot feed the mind pornography and pray for purity, outrage and pray for peace, gossip and pray for charity, materialism and pray for contentment, unbelief and pray for faith, vanity and pray for humility. God is not mocked. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). The mind has soil, and every day somebody is planting something in it. The world has a seed bag. The flesh has another. The Holy Ghost has given you a Book. Choose carefully. A Bible opened daily with submission will do more for spiritual thinking than a thousand vague resolutions to "be more positive." God did not command optimism. He commanded truth. Truth exposes lies, corrects desires, steadies emotions, rebukes pride, strengthens faith, and gives the believer something solid to stand on when the mind would otherwise run wild.

Walking in the Spirit therefore includes learning to think under the government of the Holy Ghost through the word He inspired. It means refusing to let every fear become prophecy,

every desire become permission, every memory become a prison, every offense become a sermon, or every worldly voice become an authority. It means setting the mind where Christ is, filling it with what God says, testing thoughts against Scripture, starving what feeds the flesh, and deliberately dwelling on what is true and clean. The mind will never remain empty, and the flesh will gladly furnish it if you refuse to. So guard the gate. Choose the diet. Take the thought captive. Set the affection above. Renew the mind with the Book. Where the mind camps, the feet eventually follow, and a Christian who wants to walk in the Spirit had better pay close attention to where his thoughts have pitched their tent.

#### **4 of 10 — Walking in the Spirit — Yield the Throne: Why the Spirit-Filled Life Begins With Surrender**

**Key Passage: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.” (Ephesians 5:18)**

Ephesians 5:18 is one of the plainest commands in the New Testament and one of the most mishandled. “Be filled with the Spirit.” Paul is writing to saved people, not lost sinners trying to obtain the Holy Ghost. These believers have already trusted Christ, already been sealed, already been made members of His body, and already possess the indwelling Spirit. Yet they are still commanded to “be filled.” That immediately tells you that filling is not the same thing as receiving the Spirit at salvation. You do not receive Him by installments, like God is shipping heaven in monthly boxes until the Christian finally completes the set. The Holy Ghost is a Person, not a liquid, voltage, atmosphere, or religious substance. The believer receives Him when he is saved. Filling concerns practical control. Salvation settles possession; filling settles government. The question is not whether the Holy Ghost lives in you. The question is whether He is running what He inhabits.

Paul’s comparison makes the point impossible to miss: “be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.” A drunk man comes under the influence of something outside himself. Alcohol affects his speech, judgment, movement, restraint, decisions, and conduct. Paul contrasts that control with the control of the Spirit of God. The Spirit-filled life is therefore not an emotional voltage surge that throws a man across a floor while somebody holds his coat. It is divine government over the faculties God gave him. The Spirit affects speech, thinking, worship, relationships, gratitude, submission, and conduct. That is why the verses following Ephesians 5:18 immediately deal with “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” giving thanks, and submitting one to another. The Holy Ghost does not fill a man so he can perform. He fills him so Christ can rule where self used to hold court.

Something will always occupy the practical throne of a Christian's life. If it is not the Spirit, pride will volunteer. Anger will take the chair. Lust will grab the microphone. Fear will start issuing executive orders. Ambition will draft policy. Bitterness will lock the doors. Appetite will raid the treasury. Self-will will announce that God may advise but certainly cannot govern. The flesh does not object to Christianity so long as Christianity remains ceremonial. It will attend church, sing hymns, carry a Bible, and even speak religious language if nobody asks it to surrender the keys. The trouble begins when the Spirit of God says, "Yield." Romans 6:13 commands, "yield yourselves unto God." That is the battlefield. Spirit-filling begins where self-rule ends. The Holy Ghost does not need to become larger. The Christian needs to quit acting like the throne came with his name engraved on it.

### **1. Indwelling Means He Is There**

Romans 8:9 gives the doctrinal line clearly: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." In this present Church Age, the saved believer possesses the Spirit of God. The Holy Ghost is not a bonus for advanced Christians who graduate from ordinary salvation. He is not reserved for people who pray longer, shout louder, fast harder, or discover a secret second blessing. If a man belongs to Christ, the Spirit dwells in him. First Corinthians 6:19 asks believers, "know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?" The body of the Christian is a temple because the Holy Ghost resides there. That is positional truth. It is settled at salvation. A believer may grieve Him, quench Him, resist His leading, and walk carnally, but the Spirit does not pack a suitcase every time the Christian has a bad Tuesday.

First Corinthians 3:16 reinforces the same truth: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Paul said that to Corinthians who were so carnal he had just called them "babes in Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:1). Their carnality did not prove the Spirit was absent. It proved that indwelling and practical control are not identical. That distinction is essential. If indwelling depended on perfect conduct, nobody would keep the Holy Ghost past breakfast. Salvation would become a revolving door where the Spirit moved in and out according to daily performance. Scripture teaches nothing of the kind. The believer's standing rests in Christ, not in the steadiness of his feelings or conduct. The Holy Ghost indwells because salvation has joined the believer to Christ. He does not rent space by the hour according to the tenant's behavior.

Yet indwelling makes disobedience more serious, not less. First Corinthians 6:20 follows the temple statement with, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Ownership changes conduct. The Christian does not own himself absolutely. Christ purchased him with blood. The Holy Ghost inhabits him. Therefore the body is not private property to be loaned to lust, drunkenness, anger, vanity,

greed, or uncleanness whenever self feels entitled. The flesh says, “My body, my choice,” but Calvary answers, “bought with a price.” That settles the title deed. Indwelling means the Christian carries the presence of God everywhere he goes. There is no compartment where he can tell the Holy Ghost to wait in the hallway while the flesh uses the room. If God lives in the house, every room matters.

## **2. Sealing Means He Is Staying**

Ephesians 1:13 states, “after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.” Notice the order: hearing, believing, sealing. The Holy Ghost’s sealing is connected with salvation, not later spiritual achievement. Ephesians 4:30 adds the duration: “whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” That is security language. The seal does not expire because the believer stumbled, failed, lost his temper, missed a prayer meeting, or had a miserable week. God seals the believer “unto the day of redemption.” The Spirit marks divine ownership and guarantees the future completion of what God began. This is why filling cannot mean repeatedly receiving the Holy Ghost again after He departed. You cannot be sealed unto redemption by Someone who supposedly leaves every time you disappoint Him. Eternal security is not a loophole for sin; it is the stability from which the Christian fights sin.

The same verse that gives security also gives responsibility: “grieve not the holy Spirit of God.” You can grieve the One who remains. That should sober a believer more than the threat of abandonment. A child does not cease being a son every time he disobeys his father, but fellowship can be damaged and the father can be grieved. So it is in the believer’s walk. The Holy Ghost remains because God’s sealing is secure, yet sin grieves Him. Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, malice, and corrupt communication appear in the surrounding context of Ephesians 4. That list is painfully ordinary. God does not merely care about spectacular sins that make newspaper headlines. He cares about the poison in the tongue, the resentment in the heart, and the ugliness carried from one room to another. Security should never breed carelessness. The fact that He stays ought to make sin more shameful.

Some Christians imagine that fear of losing salvation is necessary to produce holiness. The New Testament teaches the opposite. Grace gives the believer a secure standing and then tells him to live worthy of what he has received. Romans 6 does not threaten believers with becoming unsaved; it asks, “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” Identity becomes the argument for holiness. You belong to Christ. You are sealed. You are indwelt. Therefore quit living like the flesh owns the deed. A soldier fights better when he knows which army he belongs to. A child obeys better when he understands the family name he carries. The Spirit’s sealing settles ownership so the believer can stop wondering

whether God still wants him and start dealing with the rebellion God already condemned. Assurance is not a mattress for laziness. Properly understood, it is a platform for obedience.

### **3. The Spirit's Baptism Places the Believer Into Christ's Body**

First Corinthians 12:13 says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." That is not describing water baptism, nor is it describing an ecstatic second experience for a spiritual elite. The verse says "we all." In the Church Age, Spirit baptism is the divine operation by which the believer is placed into the body of Christ. It happens in connection with salvation, not as a later upgrade for Christians dissatisfied with ordinary grace. The body is Christ's body; the Spirit places the believer into it. This is positional, not emotional. A man may feel nothing dramatic at all when God performs the operation. Heaven does not require goose bumps before it records facts. The believer's standing is established by what God does, not by what his nervous system reports. Truth does not need adrenaline to become true.

That distinction matters because confusion over Spirit baptism has produced generations of Christians chasing an experience they already received positionally in Christ. Instead of resting in completed salvation and learning to walk under the Spirit's control, they search for some later event that will supposedly move them into a superior class. But 1 Corinthians 12 destroys the hierarchy. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." All. The Corinthians were gifted, divided, immature, quarrelsome, and carnal, yet they belonged to the body. Their problem was not absence from Christ's body. Their problem was failure to live according to what membership meant. Religion loves to send believers shopping for something God already gave them. It keeps them busy chasing a receipt while the package is sitting unopened in the house.

Spirit baptism also magnifies unity because believers are placed into one body, not into competing spiritual castes. First Corinthians 12 goes on to describe different members with different functions, yet one body under one Head. No member can boast as though his gift makes him the whole organism. The eye is not the body. The hand is not the body. The loudest member is not automatically the most spiritual member. Some parts function quietly and are still necessary. That ought to cure much religious showmanship. A Spirit-baptized believer does not need to advertise himself as specially anointed above the rest. The Holy Ghost did not place him into Christ's body so he could spend the next forty years drawing arrows toward himself. Spiritual life points toward the Head. The more the Spirit governs a believer, the less obsessed that believer becomes with proving how spiritual he is.

#### **4. Filling Is About Control, Not Quantity**

The command “be filled with the Spirit” cannot mean getting more of the Spirit as though the Holy Ghost were measured by ounces. God does not give a quarter-Spirit at conversion and then wait for the believer to earn the remaining three quarters. The Spirit is a Person. You either possess Him or you do not. Filling concerns how completely His influence governs the believer’s practical life. The comparison with drunkenness makes this plain. A drunk man comes under an influence that alters conduct. A Spirit-filled man comes under divine influence that alters conduct in the opposite direction. One loses proper control; the other comes under holy control. One becomes less fit to govern himself; the other becomes more obedient, sober, thankful, wise, and ordered. Calling loss of self-control “Spirit-filled” is a strange way to honor a Spirit whose fruit includes “temperance” (Galatians 5:23).

Luke and Acts sometimes use “filled with the Holy Ghost” in settings involving bold witness, prophetic utterance, or special ministry. The Church Age epistles show the ongoing practical command. Ephesians 5:18 is not asking believers to wait for a spectacular rush but to live under continual spiritual government. The grammar is practical and recurring: keep being filled, keep yielding, keep walking. Yesterday’s surrender does not automatically govern today’s decisions. The flesh wakes up early and never needs coffee. It will volunteer for management before your feet hit the floor. That is why Spirit-filling must be practical and continual. Every new circumstance becomes another place where control is tested. Anger knocks. Fear speaks. Pride rises. Appetite demands. The believer must yield again. Spiritual maturity is not reaching the point where surrender is unnecessary. It is becoming quicker to surrender because you have learned what happens when the flesh gets the keys.

The filling of the Spirit also produces recognizable effects. Ephesians 5:19 gives worship: “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” Verse 20 gives thanksgiving: “Giving thanks always for all things unto God.” Verse 21 gives submission: “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” Then the passage moves into marriage, family, and household responsibilities. That order is devastating to shallow spirituality. Paul does not say, “Be filled with the Spirit, and you will roll farther down the aisle.” He says the filling will affect your worship, gratitude, humility, marriage, parenting, and service. Apparently the Holy Ghost believes spirituality should survive contact with the people who live with you. The greatest test of filling may not be what happens near the altar. It may be what happens when supper is late and somebody says the wrong thing.

#### **5. Yielding Is Where the Throne Changes Hands**

Romans 6:13 gives the word that modern Christianity dislikes because it leaves no room for self-rule: “yield yourselves unto God.” Yielding means presenting the will, body, members, ambitions, habits, appetites, and decisions to divine authority. The flesh wants negotiation. It will surrender six rooms if God lets it keep the locked room upstairs. It will give Sunday morning if it retains Saturday night. It will surrender visible sins while keeping the secret bitterness nobody sees. But God does not ask for partial occupancy. “Yield yourselves.” The Christian cannot be Spirit-controlled while maintaining private reservations where the Spirit’s authority is forbidden. Surrender is not God taking away personality. It is God taking away rebellion. The flesh calls that oppression because the flesh has always considered independence from God a sacred right. Eden proved where that philosophy leads.

Yielding also means the believer stops demanding that God approve desires merely because they are strong. A strong desire is not guidance. An intense emotion is not revelation. A long-held ambition is not automatically calling. The flesh can want something sincerely and still want it wrongly. Proverbs 3:5–6 says, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him.” Acknowledging God “in all thy ways” means His authority extends beyond church matters into business, marriage, money, speech, entertainment, friendships, habits, and plans. The Spirit-filled believer does not ask God to bless a route already chosen by self. He submits the map before starting the engine. Too many Christians want divine navigation while refusing to surrender the steering wheel. Then they blame Providence when they land in a ditch.

There is freedom in surrender because self-rule is a cruel master. Pride must constantly defend itself. Fear must constantly predict disaster. Lust must constantly seek another dose. Ambition must constantly compare. Bitterness must constantly reopen the wound to stay alive. The Spirit leads differently. Romans 8:14 says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” His leadership corresponds to truth, holiness, and the believer’s new identity in Christ. Yielding does not shrink life; it removes tyrants. The throne was never safe in the hands of the flesh. Self makes a poor god because it cannot even guarantee tomorrow morning. The Christian who yields to God is not losing sovereignty he truly possessed. He is finally admitting that the crown never fit.

## **6. Spirit-Filling Shows Up in Ordinary Conduct**

Ephesians 5 and 6 refuse to let Spirit-filling remain inside a church service. Immediately after commanding believers to be filled, Paul deals with worship, thanksgiving, submission, marriage, children, fathers, servants, and masters. That means filling walks home. A husband claiming spiritual power is told, “love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church” (Ephesians 5:25). A wife is given her responsibilities. Children are told to obey.

Fathers are told not to provoke. Servants are told how to work. Masters are told how to rule. The Holy Ghost is not impressed by a man who appears powerful in public while acting like Caesar at home. If spirituality disappears when the audience does, it was probably acting. The filling of the Spirit reaches the kitchen, bedroom, workplace, bank account, schedule, and conversation. God knows whether the halo comes off in the driveway.

Colossians 3 gives the same kind of practical evidence. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Colossians 3:16), followed by singing, gratitude, and family order. Compare that with Ephesians 5 and you see the connection between Spirit-filling and Scripture saturation. The Spirit who inspired the word does not lead contrary to the word. A Christian cannot neglect the Bible, ignore its commands, disobey its plain instruction, and then claim deep Spirit-filling because he had a powerful sensation during a song. That is like ignoring every letter from the king and then claiming intimate loyalty because you liked the trumpet music at the palace. The Spirit’s filling and the word’s dwelling produce corresponding results because the same God stands behind both. The Spirit-filled believer is increasingly a Bible-governed believer.

Wisdom is another mark. Ephesians 5:15 says, “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.” Verse 17 adds, “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.” Then comes verse 18: “be filled with the Spirit.” The context ties Spirit-filling to wise walking and understanding God’s will. The Holy Ghost does not make a believer foolish under the excuse of spirituality. He makes him more sober about truth, time, conduct, and responsibility. The Spirit-filled man redeems the time because “the days are evil.” He does not drift through life waiting for mystical signals about matters Scripture already settled. Wisdom looks at the clock, the Book, the duty, and the opportunity, then obeys. Biblical spirituality has enough heaven in it to make a man useful on earth.

## **7. The Spirit-Filled Life Makes Christ Larger and Self Smaller**

John 16:14 gives the Spirit’s direction: “He shall glorify me.” The Holy Ghost magnifies Jesus Christ. Therefore a genuinely Spirit-filled life will increasingly make Christ central rather than the believer’s experiences, gifts, reputation, stories, and personality. The flesh loves spiritual autobiography because it gets to remain the subject even while discussing God. It can spend an hour explaining its visions, victories, revelations, burdens, anointings, insights, and special moments until Jesus Christ appears as a supporting character in somebody else’s testimony. The Holy Ghost moves the spotlight. He glorifies Christ. He takes what belongs to Christ and shows it unto the believer. Spirit-filling therefore produces a deeper esteem for the Lord Jesus, stronger submission to His word, and less appetite for

advertising oneself as unusually spiritual. The man closest to the Light becomes more aware that he is not the Light.

This does not produce false humility, where a man spends twenty minutes telling you how humble he is. It produces service without constant demand for recognition. Philippians 2:3 says, “in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” The Spirit-filled believer can serve where nobody applauds because his reward system has changed. He can perform an unnoticed duty without announcing that nobody noticed. He can give without building a monument to the giver. He can preach truth without treating every disagreement as an attack on his dignity. He can apologize when wrong because pride is no longer acting as chief counsel. The flesh hates obscurity because obscurity starves its appetite for importance. The Spirit can use a man in a hidden place just as easily as on a platform. Heaven has never confused visibility with value.

Most importantly, Spirit-filling produces Christlike character because the fruit of the Spirit is described in Galatians 5:22–23. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance—none of those qualities requires a microphone. They require surrender. A loud man can fake excitement; he cannot fake longsuffering forever. A gifted man can impress a congregation; his family eventually learns whether gentleness is real. A polished speaker can talk about temperance; temptation will reveal who controls the appetite. Fruit is slow evidence, but it is stubborn evidence. Plastic fruit photographs well, but nobody survives by eating it. The Holy Ghost is interested in producing living character, not decorating dead branches. The Spirit-filled Christian is not the person making the most noise in the room. He is the person whose flesh has been told, repeatedly and firmly, to get out of the chair.

## **Conclusion**

The distinctions are simple once Scripture is allowed to speak. Indwelling means the Holy Ghost lives in the saved believer. Sealing means the believer is marked and secured “unto the day of redemption.” Spirit baptism places the believer into the body of Christ. Filling concerns practical control. Confuse those truths and the Christian spends his life chasing experiences God never told him to chase. Keep them straight and the command of Ephesians 5:18 becomes plain. The believer does not beg for a Spirit he lacks. He yields to the Spirit he already possesses. He does not hunt for a second salvation, another sealing, or repeated entrance into Christ’s body. He presents himself to God. The doctrinal work of salvation is settled in Christ; the practical work of surrender continues daily. Position is complete. Walk must be maintained. Grace saves once; obedience keeps getting out of bed every morning.

The throne is where the whole issue finally lands. Somebody will sit there. Pride wants it. Fear wants it. Lust wants it. Anger wants it. Ambition wants it. Bitterness wants it. Self-will believes the throne belongs to it by natural right. The Holy Ghost does not negotiate a rotating schedule where God rules Monday through Saturday and the flesh gets Sunday afternoon off. “Yield yourselves unto God.” The command is simple because the problem is simple: who is governing? The flesh may complain, but complaint is not authority. Appetite may demand, but desire is not lordship. Emotion may shout, but volume does not create truth. The Spirit-filled life begins when the believer stops confusing strong feelings with rightful ownership and remembers that Christ purchased the entire property at Calvary.

So yield the throne. Not theatrically, not sentimentally, not for one emotional moment while the music plays, but practically. Yield the tongue before it speaks. Yield the eyes before they wander. Yield the temper before it erupts. Yield the ambition before it demands recognition. Yield the fear before it writes tomorrow’s obituary. Yield the appetite before it becomes a master. Yield the schedule, the money, the home, the plans, the private thoughts, and the public service. Let the word of Christ dwell richly. Walk circumspectly. Give thanks. Submit where Scripture commands. Love where flesh resists. Obey when obedience costs. That is Spirit-filling with work boots on. The Holy Ghost is not trying to make the Christian spectacular. He is making him surrendered. The flesh has occupied the chair long enough. Christ bought the throne, the Spirit has entered the house, and self has no legitimate claim to rule either one.

## **5 of 10 — Walking in the Spirit — Kill What Keeps Crawling Back: Mortifying the Deeds of the Body**

**Key Passage: “For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” (Romans 8:13)**

Romans 8:13 uses a word modern Christianity would rather replace with something softer: “mortify.” God did not say negotiate with the deeds of the body, understand them better, rename them, manage them, accommodate them, or teach them healthier boundaries. He said mortify them. Put them to death. Sin is not a wounded puppy that wandered onto the porch and needs compassion; it is a snake under the crib. You do not schedule counseling sessions with a rattlesnake. You kill the thing before it sinks its fangs into somebody. The flesh is not misunderstood. It is contrary to the Spirit. It has already shown what it wants in Galatians 5:19–21, and the list is not pretty. The believer therefore does not improve the old

nature; he denies it. Mortification is the practical refusal to let the body's sinful appetites become commanders simply because they keep shouting orders.

The context of Romans 8 protects this doctrine from two opposite errors. Verse 1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The believer is not mortifying sin in order to escape eternal condemnation. Christ settled that matter at Calvary. Romans 8:9 says the saved man is "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." His position has changed. He belongs to Christ. Yet verse 13 still tells him to mortify the deeds of the body. Position does not eliminate practice. Grace does not remove warfare. Eternal security does not make carnality harmless. The Christian fights sin not to become accepted but because he already is accepted in Christ. He does not swing the sword hoping God will adopt him afterward. He fights because God has already made him His own and the old nature has no rightful business ruling purchased property.

The flesh, however, is remarkably persistent. Bury one appetite Monday morning and you may hear scratching inside the coffin before Thursday afternoon. The old nature has no sense of embarrassment. Defeat it in one area and it will try another door. Deny lust and pride may congratulate you for being pure. Deny pride and self-pity may complain that nobody appreciates your humility. Shut down anger and bitterness may sit quietly in the cellar keeping records. The flesh can change uniforms without changing armies. That is why mortification is not a one-time ceremony but a continuing part of walking in the Spirit. Colossians 3:5 says, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth." God assumes there are things in the Christian's practical life that need killing. The flesh would prefer probation. God gave it a death sentence.

## **1. Mortification Begins With Knowing What God Already Condemned**

Before a Christian can mortify sin, he must stop arguing with God about what sin is. Colossians 3:5 does not leave the matter floating in religious fog: "fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." Verse 8 adds "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication." Scripture names the criminals. Modern religion often changes the labels because changing labels feels easier than changing conduct. Covetousness becomes ambition. Pride becomes self-confidence. Lust becomes authenticity. Bitterness becomes protecting your peace. Anger becomes being passionate. Filthy communication becomes humor. God is not impressed by the relabeling department. A bottle of poison does not become orange juice because somebody prints a cheerful sticker and puts it in the refrigerator. Mortification begins when the Christian lets the Bible name the thing before the flesh hires a public-relations firm to make it respectable.

Romans 7:18 gives the correct diagnosis: “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.” Paul does not leave room for the flesh to submit a revised résumé. “No good thing” means precisely what it says. That does not mean the believer cannot perform outwardly decent acts; it means the old nature itself is not a source of spiritual righteousness. Flesh does not become holy by religious education. You can teach it Bible terminology, put it in church clothes, give it a title, and let it sit on a platform, but flesh remains flesh. Jesus said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh” (John 3:6). God does not renovate Adam’s old nature. He gives new life in Christ and commands the believer to reckon the old man crucified. The trouble starts whenever Christians begin trusting what God already condemned.

Romans 6:6 says, “our old man is crucified with him.” Verse 11 tells believers, “reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Reckoning is believing God’s verdict and acting accordingly. The old man does not possess rightful authority simply because he still makes noise. A condemned criminal may yell from the cell; he is not governor. The believer’s responsibility is to stop treating every fleshly desire as though it carries official orders. Lust says look. Scripture says flee. Anger says strike back. Scripture says forgive. Pride says demand recognition. Scripture says humble yourself. Covetousness says get more. Scripture says be content. Mortification starts where the Christian quits asking whether the flesh agrees with God’s judgment. The defendant does not get to rewrite the sentence after the Judge has spoken.

## **2. Mortification Is Not Asceticism or Self-Punishment**

Because the Bible uses strong language about killing sinful deeds, some have confused mortification with mistreating the body itself. Scripture does not teach that holiness comes by starving, beating, injuring, or tormenting the physical body. Colossians 2:23 warns about “neglecting of the body” while explaining that such religious practices are “not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.” External harshness can leave the old nature completely untouched. A man can deny himself legitimate food and still feast on pride. He can sleep on a hard floor and dream about how much holier he is than everyone with a mattress. Flesh is wonderfully talented at turning self-denial into self-worship. Give it ashes and sackcloth long enough and it will start admiring how impressive it looks in ashes and sackcloth.

The body itself is not evil. First Corinthians 6:19 calls the believer’s body “the temple of the Holy Ghost.” Romans 12:1 tells Christians to “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.” The same body that can be yielded as an instrument of unrighteousness can be yielded as an instrument of righteousness. The problem is not that eyes exist, but what they are permitted to gaze upon. The problem is not that a tongue

exists, but whether it blesses or poisons. The problem is not that appetite exists, but whether appetite rules. Food is not sin. Marriage is not sin. Sleep is not sin. Work is not sin. Pleasure within God's boundaries is not sin. Ascetic religion often declares war on things God permitted because fighting obvious physical comforts can feel more spiritual than fighting invisible pride. It is easier to skip supper than to forgive an enemy.

Biblical mortification therefore does not mean destroying the instrument; it means refusing to let sin play it. A knife can prepare food or commit murder. The instrument is not the issue; the hand controlling it is. Romans 6:13 says, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God." Eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet, mind, appetite, and strength are to be placed under divine authority. Mortification cuts off sinful use while preserving righteous service. God does not want a broken instrument sitting useless in a corner. He wants an instrument yielded to Him. Religious flesh sometimes boasts, "Look what I gave up." The Holy Ghost asks, "What are you now yielded to?" Holiness is not merely subtraction. The grave must be followed by resurrection living.

### **3. Grace Does Not Excuse the Flesh; Grace Teaches You to Deny It**

Titus 2:11–12 destroys the idea that grace is permission for continued indulgence: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly." Grace teaches denial. The same grace that saves the sinner teaches the saint to say no. If somebody's version of grace never tells the flesh no, it may be sentimental religion, but it is not Titus 2 grace. Grace does not wink at sin because Calvary was expensive. It hates sin because Calvary revealed how expensive sin really was. Christ did not shed His blood so the believer could build a comfortable guest room for the very thing that nailed Him to the cross.

Romans 6 anticipates the cheap-grace argument: "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid." That answer should be short enough for everybody. Grace does not abolish responsibility. It abolishes condemnation for those in Christ while establishing an entirely new relationship to sin. Romans 6:14 says, "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Notice what grace does: it breaks dominion. The flesh would like to twist that verse until "not under the law" means "nothing matters." Paul says the opposite. Grace removes sin's throne. A Christian using grace to excuse bondage is like a freed prisoner carrying his own chains back into the cell because freedom seems too demanding. The door is open. Stop decorating the prison.

This is why mortification must never be preached as a means of earning salvation. A lost man can reform habits, stop drinking, clean up language, and become respectable while remaining dead in trespasses and sins. Moral improvement cannot regenerate him. Salvation is “by grace...through faith” and “not of works” (Ephesians 2:8–9). But verse 10 immediately says believers are “created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” Proper order matters. Good works are fruit, not root. Mortification belongs to sanctified Christian living, not to the price of justification. Christ saves completely. The believer then fights sin because he belongs to Christ. Put works before salvation and you get religion. Remove works after salvation and you get disobedience wearing a grace badge. Scripture keeps both in their proper seats.

#### **4. Starve What You Intend to Kill**

Romans 13:14 says, “make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” That command exposes a great deal of foolish praying. Some Christians beg God for victory over sins they continue feeding three times a day. They ask for purity while maintaining access to impurity. They ask for temperance while surrounding themselves with temptation. They ask for deliverance from gossip while keeping the same telephone circuit warm every evening. They pray against covetousness while spending hours admiring everything they do not own. Then they are shocked when the flesh remains strong. Feed a stray cat every night and it will return every morning. Feed the flesh constantly and it will not mail you a thank-you note and move away. It will take possession of the porch.

Jesus used equally severe language about removing occasions of sin. In Matthew 5:29–30 He spoke of plucking out the right eye and cutting off the right hand in a context of lust and stumbling. The language is deliberately drastic, not an instruction for physical mutilation but a demand for ruthless separation from whatever leads into sin. Do not pet the occasion and then complain about the outcome. If a device becomes a pipeline for lust, change how it is used. If a friendship repeatedly drags you into rebellion, stop pretending fellowship requires surrender. If a place weakens resistance, stay away. If late-night idleness becomes a doorway, alter the pattern. The flesh will call every practical safeguard legalism because the flesh prefers unlocked doors. A burglar always favors a homeowner with relaxed security.

Starving the flesh also means feeding the new man. Colossians 3 does not stop with “mortify.” It continues with “put on therefore” mercy, kindness, humbleness, meekness, longsuffering, forgiveness, charity, peace, thanksgiving, and the rich indwelling of the word of Christ. You do not defeat darkness merely by staring at a blank wall. Turn on the light. Replace corrupt thought with Scripture, bitterness with forgiveness, idleness with service, lust with purity, covetousness with gratitude, and self-occupation with attention to Christ.

The flesh weakens when it is denied provision, while spiritual strength grows through truth and obedience. Pulling weeds matters, but a garden left empty will grow weeds again. Plant something worth keeping.

## **5. Some Sins Must Be Fled, Not Debated**

Second Timothy 2:22 gives a wonderfully unromantic strategy: “Flee also youthful lusts.” Sometimes victory looks like running. Joseph demonstrated it in Genesis 39 when Potiphar’s wife caught his garment and he “fled, and got him out.” He did not remain in the room to prove his spiritual maturity. He did not open a dialogue on boundaries. He did not ask whether one more conversation might provide ministry opportunities. He ran. There are temptations you do not defeat by standing close enough to smell them. You leave. A man who boasts that he can handle temptation may soon discover temptation can handle him. First Corinthians 10:12 says, “let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” Pride has buried more strong men than weakness ever did.

Fleeing is especially important because the flesh becomes less reasonable the longer temptation is entertained. James 1:14 says a man is “drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.” Once desire has fastened itself to the bait, judgment begins losing ground. That is why the battle should be decided before the moment of maximum pressure. Daniel “purposed in his heart” before the test unfolded (Daniel 1:8). Joseph had convictions before the bedroom door closed. The wise Christian establishes boundaries while thinking clearly rather than waiting until desire has rewritten the rules. Nobody designs a fire escape after the building is fully engulfed. Decide now what you will refuse later. The flesh dislikes advance decisions because it prefers emergency negotiations where it controls the microphone.

Fleeing does not mean cowardice; it means knowing the enemy. David killed Goliath, but Samson lingered around Delilah until she learned where the strength lay. Different battles require different tactics. Ephesians 6 says stand against the devil. First Corinthians 6 says flee fornication. First Corinthians 10 says flee idolatry. Second Timothy says flee youthful lusts. Scripture knows when to stand and when to run. Religious bravado ignores those distinctions and gets people hurt. The soldier who obeys a retreat order is not less courageous than the fool who refuses it and dies on a hill nobody told him to defend. Mortification requires enough humility to admit that certain temptations deserve distance rather than conversation. If sin is scratching at the door, do not invite it inside to discuss why it should leave.

## **6. Mortification Reaches Respectable Sins Too**

Christians often become severe about sins they do not personally enjoy and strangely philosophical about the ones they do. Drunkenness gets condemned while gluttony receives another helping. Adultery is denounced while bitterness sits three pews over taking notes. Filthy speech is rebuked while pride quietly teaches Sunday school. Covetousness gets renamed stewardship goals. Laziness becomes “waiting on the Lord.” Anger becomes “telling it like it is.” The flesh is pleased with selective holiness because it can sacrifice somebody else’s sins on the altar while keeping its own pets indoors. Colossians 3 refuses the arrangement. It names sexual sins, then moves directly into anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication, and lying. God does not sort sin according to which category embarrasses church people most.

Pride is especially difficult to mortify because it can feed on the process of mortification itself. A man overcomes a habit and immediately begins measuring everybody who still struggles with it. He stops doing one wrong thing and begins admiring himself for stopping. The flesh has merely changed chairs. Paul warned in Galatians 6:1 that restoration must be done “in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Victory should produce gratitude, not swagger. If God gives you strength over a sin, thank Him and help others carefully. Do not stand beside the grave taking selfies with the corpse. The flesh loves funeral photography if it can still be in the picture.

Laziness also deserves a place under the knife. Romans 12:11 says, “Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.” The flesh does not always lure a Christian into scandal. Sometimes it merely persuades him to waste his life. Hours disappear into triviality. Duties are delayed. Prayer is postponed. Scripture is neglected. Service becomes inconvenient. Opportunities die of old age while the believer insists he will start tomorrow. Proverbs has little patience with the sluggard, and neither should we. Mortification includes killing the habit of continually choosing ease over duty. The flesh wants comfort today and promises responsibility tomorrow. Tomorrow has been financing that lie since Eden. Obedience uses the day God actually gave.

## **7. Mortification Must Be Done Through the Spirit**

Romans 8:13 does not merely say, “mortify the deeds of the body.” It says, “if ye through the Spirit do mortify.” That phrase keeps mortification from becoming flesh fighting flesh. Human willpower can suppress behavior for a time, and discipline certainly has value, but spiritual victory requires the Holy Ghost applying the truth of God to the believer’s walk. Zechariah 4:6 gives a principle worth remembering: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.” In the Church Age, the believer possesses the indwelling Spirit and is commanded to walk in Him. The flesh cannot crucify itself successfully. Give it the hammer and it will eventually build a throne instead of a coffin.

Walking through the Spirit means yielding to Scripture when conviction comes, praying before temptation becomes surrender, depending on God instead of boasting in personal strength, and obeying promptly. Galatians 5:16 says, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” Notice that Paul does not say stand around admiring the Spirit. Walk. Movement matters. Take the obedient step in front of you. Shut the door. Tell the truth. Forgive the person. Put away the filth. Turn off the temptation. Get up and do the duty. Open the Bible. Pray. Serve. Mortification becomes practical in individual acts of obedience. Nobody kills the flesh by writing inspirational quotes about killing the flesh. The sword does its work when it is actually swung.

The Spirit also keeps the believer’s attention directed toward Christ rather than toward endless self-inspection. Romans 8 moves from conflict to assurance, adoption, hope, prayer, and the love of God in Christ. The goal of mortification is not to become fascinated with personal corruption. A man can spend so long staring into the sewer that he forgets there is a sky. Hebrews 12:2 says, “Looking unto Jesus.” Colossians 3 says, “seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth.” Mortification makes room for communion, worship, service, and fruit. Kill what belongs to the old life so the new life is not constantly choked by weeds. The objective is not a Christian preoccupied with everything he cannot do. It is a Christian increasingly free to do what pleases his Lord.

## **Conclusion**

Mortification is not fashionable language because death never has been fashionable to the flesh. The old nature prefers management plans, negotiated settlements, adjusted expectations, and softer terminology. God says, “mortify.” That command is severe because sin is severe. Lust destroys. Bitterness poisons. Pride blinds. Covetousness enslaves. Anger burns. Laziness wastes. Envy corrodes. Filthy communication stains. These are not harmless personality quirks waiting to be understood. They are deeds of the body to be put under the sentence God has already pronounced. The Christian does not need to hate his physical body or invent punishments God never commanded. He needs to hate what sin tries to do through the body. Kill the deed, not the instrument. Yield the instrument to God.

Nor does mortification threaten salvation by grace. It rests upon salvation by grace. The believer is “in Christ Jesus.” He is indwelt and sealed by the Spirit. He has no condemnation. He belongs to God. Those truths are the foundation from which he fights, not prizes waiting at the finish line if he fights well enough. Grace has already established the relationship; mortification protects the walk. When the believer falls, he does not purchase another Calvary. He confesses the sin, forsakes it, gets up, and resumes walking. The flesh will return. Let it. A knock at the door is not ownership of the house. Temptation

returning does not mean previous obedience was worthless. Some enemies must be defeated repeatedly because they refuse to stay buried. Keep the shovel nearby.

So when the old appetite scratches at the coffin lid, do not ask whether it has developed better intentions. Nail the lid down again. When bitterness starts breathing, drag it back to Ephesians 4:32. When lust climbs out, answer it with flight and Scripture. When pride sits up, remind it what Romans 7:18 says about the flesh. When covetousness begins counting another man's blessings, force it to give thanks for your own. When laziness whispers "tomorrow," obey today. When anger demands the throne, yield your members to God. This is not glamorous Christianity. It is war with work clothes on. The Holy Ghost does not call the believer to pamper what Christ condemned. Grace gave you life; the Spirit gives power for obedience; Scripture gives the orders. The old nature may keep crawling back, but that does not mean you give it a room. Put the rascal back in the grave.

## **6 of 10 — Walking in the Spirit — Fruit Cannot Be Faked: The Evidence of a Spirit-Governed Life**

**Key Passage: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22–23)**

Galatians 5 does something wonderfully inconvenient to religious showmanship: it gives us a list. If somebody wants to know what the Holy Ghost produces in a believer's life, Paul does not send him looking for trembling knees, rolling bodies, mysterious syllables, private messages from heaven, or a preacher who can make half the room fall backward with one swipe of his coat. He writes, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance." That is the evidence. It is not spectacular enough for people who need a circus to prove God showed up, but it is considerably harder to counterfeit. Anybody can get excited for forty-five minutes. A man can work himself into religious ecstasy before lunch and curse his family before supper. Fruit is different. Fruit has to grow, remain, feed somebody, survive weather, and prove what kind of tree produced it.

The contrast in the passage could not be sharper. Galatians 5:19–21 identifies "the works of the flesh": adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, "and such like." Then verse 22 begins, "But the fruit of the Spirit." Works and fruit. The flesh works out what is already rotten inside it; the Spirit produces

what belongs to divine life. The works of the flesh scatter, corrupt, inflame, divide, enslave, and destroy. The fruit of the Spirit heals, strengthens, restrains, steadies, serves, and glorifies Christ. The flesh can build a religion around itself if necessary, but it cannot produce the Spirit's fruit. You can hang wax grapes on a dead vine and fool the congregation from the back pew, but nobody ever made wine out of plastic.

Fruit also takes the test of time. Jesus said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:16). He did not say you shall know them by their volume, charisma, platform, vocabulary, popularity, or ability to create atmosphere. Character reveals the root because life eventually reproduces itself outwardly. The real examination of spirituality starts after the music stops, the lights go off, the microphone is unplugged, and the building empties. What is left in the car on the way home? What appears when a husband is contradicted, a wife is tired, a child disobeys, a coworker insults, a plan collapses, or somebody else receives the recognition you wanted? Pressure does not manufacture character; it uncovers it. Squeeze an orange and orange juice comes out because that is what was inside. Squeeze the Christian long enough and something will come out. Galatians 5 tells us what ought to be there.

### **1. Fruit Grows From Life; It Cannot Be Stapled Onto Dead Branches**

The word "fruit" itself teaches doctrine before we ever examine the individual qualities. Fruit grows because life exists within the plant. Nobody walks through an orchard at midnight with a staple gun fastening apples onto dead limbs and then congratulates himself on agriculture. Yet religion attempts the spiritual equivalent constantly. It teaches manners without regeneration, morality without Christ, discipline without the Holy Ghost, and outward conformity without inward life. A lost man can imitate aspects of Christian conduct, sometimes better than a careless believer, but Galatians 5 is describing "the fruit of the Spirit." This fruit proceeds from the Spirit's indwelling work in one who belongs to Christ. Romans 8:9 says, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The root comes before the fruit. Salvation is not earned by producing fruit; genuine spiritual fruit grows because the believer has already received life in Christ.

Jesus used the same organic picture in John 15:5: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." He continues, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." The branch does not grunt until grapes appear. It draws life from the vine. Christian fruitfulness therefore depends upon communion with Christ, submission to His word, and the unhindered working of the Holy Ghost. A branch separated from the vine may retain a green appearance for a little while, but death has already begun. So it is with believers who attempt to substitute activity for fellowship. They stay busy, attend meetings, argue doctrine, post verses, perform ministries, and keep religious machinery turning while

privately starving the inner man. Motion is not life. A ceiling fan can move all day and never grow a grape.

Fruit also develops gradually, which exposes the modern obsession with instant spirituality. An apple tree does not produce a mature crop fifteen minutes after planting. The believer grows through Scripture, obedience, correction, trial, prayer, service, failure confessed, lessons learned, and repeated surrender to the Holy Ghost. That does not excuse stagnation; it explains growth. Philippians 1:6 says, “he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” God is working toward maturity. The Christian should therefore look for real progress rather than theatrical moments. Is the temper becoming more governed? Is forgiveness coming faster? Is pride losing ground? Is gratitude replacing complaint? Is Scripture shaping reactions? Spiritual growth may happen quietly, but quiet does not mean weak. Oak trees make very little noise while becoming strong enough to survive storms.

## **2. Love and Joy Expose Self-Centered Religion**

The first fruit named is “love.” Biblical love is not sentimental approval of everything everybody does. God is love, yet God condemns sin. Jesus loved enough to rebuke, correct, warn, sacrifice, and die. First Corinthians 13 describes charity as longsuffering, kind, not envious, not puffed up, not self-seeking, not easily provoked, and rejoicing “in the truth.” That last phrase ruins the counterfeit love preached by a world that calls any disagreement hatred. Spirit-produced love operates under truth. It seeks another person’s good rather than merely another person’s approval. It forgives when the flesh wants revenge, serves when self wants attention, gives when greed wants to keep, and tells the truth when flattery would be easier. Fleshly love lasts until it stops getting what it wants. Spiritual love keeps obeying when self-interest has left the building.

This is why love is tested most severely among people who know us well. Loving strangers at a distance is inexpensive. They do not leave dishes in the sink, interrupt plans, repeat the same annoying habit, misunderstand your tone, or spend your money. A husband can speak warmly to a church lobby full of people and then treat his wife like an inconvenience. A mother can praise God publicly while cutting her children with a sharp tongue. A preacher can proclaim love for humanity and despise anybody who questions him. First John 4:20 asks how a man can claim to love God while hating his brother. The Holy Ghost brings Christianity home. Love that only works under stage lighting is costume jewelry. The real thing survives kitchens, traffic, disappointments, and people who forgot to admire you.

Then comes “joy,” which is deeper than favorable circumstances. The flesh is happy when conditions cooperate. Give it comfort, praise, money, convenience, and success, and it can

smile quite convincingly. Remove those things and watch how quickly the smile files for bankruptcy. Spiritual joy rests in God, Christ, salvation, hope, fellowship, and eternal truth. Paul wrote Philippians from confinement and still said, “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Philippians 4:4). Notice the location of the joy: “in the Lord.” Christian joy is not pretending pain does not hurt or sorrow does not exist. Paul spoke of being “sorrowful, yet always rejoicing” (2 Corinthians 6:10). The world thinks those two cannot occupy the same sentence because it only knows happiness as a reaction. The Holy Ghost produces a joy with roots deeper than weather.

### **3. Peace and Longsuffering Show Who Rules Under Pressure**

“Peace” follows joy, and here again Scripture means something more substantial than a pleasant emotional temperature. Romans 5:1 says, “being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” That foundational peace rests upon reconciliation through Christ. From that settled relationship grows practical peace in the believer’s walk. Philippians 4:7 speaks of “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,” keeping hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. The Spirit-filled Christian is not promised a life without storms; he is given an anchor that does not float away with the first wave. Carnal thinking magnifies every disturbance until it fills the horizon. Spiritual peace remembers that God has not abdicated because Tuesday became difficult. Heaven has not called an emergency meeting because your plans changed.

Peace also governs relationships. Romans 12:18 says, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” That does not mean surrender truth, tolerate wickedness, or pretend doctrinal differences do not matter. Biblical peace is not cowardice with a smile. Sometimes truth divides because error refuses correction. But many conflicts have nothing to do with defending truth and everything to do with defending ego. The flesh can turn a seating arrangement, a comment, a forgotten invitation, or a minor preference into the Battle of Armageddon before lunchtime. Pride always carries spare ammunition. The Spirit produces enough peace that every disagreement does not become a crusade. A spiritually governed man learns that not every hill deserves his blood and not every irritation deserves a sermon.

Then comes “longsuffering,” one of the least glamorous fruits and one of the most revealing. Longsuffering means putting up with difficulty, delay, provocation, and imperfect people without immediately exploding, quitting, retaliating, or keeping a funeral list. God Himself is “longsuffering to us-ward” (2 Peter 3:9). If God treated us with the impatience we sometimes show others, none of us would have survived breakfast. The flesh wants instant correction, instant results, instant respect, instant answers, and instant vindication. Longsuffering waits without surrendering righteousness. It continues doing right while

another person remains difficult. It gives space for growth. It does not confuse patience with weakness. Anyone can remain calm when nobody crosses him. Longsuffering appears when somebody has been standing on your last nerve so long they have started paying property tax.

#### **4. Gentleness and Goodness Put Strength Under God's Hand**

“Gentleness” is often mistaken for softness, but biblical gentleness is strength governed by grace. Paul told the Thessalonians, “we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children” (1 Thessalonians 2:7). Gentleness knows how to handle people without unnecessary harshness. It does not delight in bruising the weak simply because it possesses enough truth to win the argument. Isaiah described the Lord’s servant as one who would not break a bruised reed. The flesh enjoys power for what power can do to others. The Spirit teaches power to stoop. A strong man who cannot control the force of his words is not strong; he is merely dangerous. Any bulldozer can knock down a fence. It takes skill to repair one without crushing everything around it.

Gentleness becomes especially important when correction is necessary. Galatians 6:1 says that if a man is overtaken in a fault, the spiritual believer should restore him “in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” Correction and gentleness are not enemies. Truth can be sharp without the teacher becoming cruel. Surgery requires a knife, but the surgeon does not swing it like a machete. Some Christians boast that they “tell it like it is,” when what they really mean is that they enjoy saying true things in unnecessarily ugly ways. A skunk can be accurate about the garbage can and still smell like a skunk. The Holy Ghost teaches a man to handle truth with enough strength to confront sin and enough grace to remember he too stands by mercy.

“Goodness” moves beyond pleasant intentions into moral action. Romans 15:14 speaks of believers being “full of goodness.” Biblical goodness does what is right because God defines what is good. It does not take its standard from public opinion, cultural fashion, or convenience. A good man keeps his word, pays what he owes, helps where he can, protects the weak, refuses corruption, and chooses righteousness when nobody offers applause. The flesh may perform a generous act if a camera is nearby. Goodness keeps working when nobody is filming. Acts 10:38 says Jesus “went about doing good.” There is something wonderfully practical about that phrase. The Spirit does not merely make the Christian think noble thoughts. He puts shoes on righteousness and sends it down the street.

#### **5. Faith and Meekness Reveal Where Confidence Really Rests**

“Faith” in the fruit of the Spirit includes fidelity, trustworthiness, and confidence rooted in God. The Spirit-governed believer increasingly becomes dependable because he serves a dependable God. His word starts meaning something. His commitments are not weather reports subject to change with every passing cloud. Jesus said, “let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay” (Matthew 5:37). Faithfulness is a disappearing virtue in an age where promises are often treated like temporary suggestions. The flesh commits when convenient and disappears when sacrifice arrives. Spiritual faith stays at the post. First Corinthians 4:2 says, “it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” Not spectacular. Faithful. Heaven places enormous value on showing up, telling the truth, finishing the work, and remaining trustworthy when nobody is handing out trophies.

Faith also steadies the believer when visible circumstances argue against God’s word. Second Corinthians 5:7 says, “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” Sight reports what is visible; faith rests upon what God has said. That does not mean denying reality. Biblical faith faces reality with a larger reality behind it. Abraham’s body was old; God’s promise was older than his problem and stronger than biology. Paul’s ship was sinking; God had already told him he would stand before Caesar. The flesh panics when circumstances stop cooperating because flesh lives by sight. Faith says the throne remains occupied. A Christian who believes God does not need every path illuminated fifty miles ahead. He needs enough light to obey the next verse in front of him.

Then Paul names “Meekness,” and meekness is not weakness wearing religious perfume. Moses was called “very meek” (Numbers 12:3), yet he confronted Pharaoh. Jesus said, “I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matthew 11:29), yet He drove money changers from the temple. Meekness is strength submitted to God rather than self. It does not need constant vindication. It can receive correction without collapsing or attacking. It can possess authority without worshipping authority. Pride must defend its reputation every five minutes because reputation is its oxygen supply. Meekness can let God keep the records. A meek man is not a doormat; he is a sword in its proper sheath, available when righteousness requires it and not swinging merely because ego got bumped.

## **6. Temperance Is the Death Blow to Religious Loss of Control**

The final fruit listed is “temperance,” and that one ought to make every theology of uncontrolled spiritual behavior sit down and reread the passage. Temperance means self-control under divine government. The Holy Ghost does not produce chaos in the believer’s faculties. He produces mastery over appetites, impulses, reactions, and desires. First Corinthians 9:25 says, “every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.” Paul then speaks of keeping his body under subjection. Biblical spirituality strengthens restraint. It does not celebrate a person becoming helpless before every emotion and then

blame the Holy Ghost for the spectacle. If the fruit of the Spirit includes temperance, then losing control cannot automatically be presented as proof that the Spirit took control. That is not complicated theology. That is reading the list.

Temperance touches food, drink, sex, speech, anger, spending, entertainment, sleep, work, recreation, and every legitimate appetite capable of becoming a master. First Corinthians 6:12 says, “I will not be brought under the power of any.” A thing may be lawful in itself and still become tyrannical through excess. Food is good; gluttony is not. Rest is good; sloth is not. Marriage is good; lust outside God’s order is not. Money can serve; covetousness enslaves. Recreation refreshes; obsession wastes life. Temperance keeps gifts from becoming gods. The flesh hates limits because it interprets “enough” as an insult. Give it one dessert and it asks about the second. Give it one hour of entertainment and suddenly midnight has arrived. Appetite is a fine servant and a terrible landlord.

Temperance also governs the tongue. Proverbs 29:11 says, “A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards.” Modern culture treats speaking every thought as authenticity. The Bible calls some of it foolishness. Not everything felt deserves to be said. Not every opinion needs publication. Not every insult requires an answer. Not every rumor deserves a forwarding address. James 1:19 says, “let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” A Spirit-governed tongue learns brakes. The flesh wants a horn. Many disasters blamed on misunderstanding would never have existed if somebody had waited thirty seconds before speaking. Temperance is the Holy Ghost putting a gate where the flesh wanted an open highway.

## **7. Fruit Is Proven When Life Gets Squeezed**

The works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit become easiest to distinguish under pressure. Galatians 5 places them side by side because they come from opposite sources. The flesh produces “hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife.” The Spirit produces love, peace, longsuffering, gentleness. Both may remain hidden during calm weather. A peaceful sea does not reveal whether the anchor works. Let contradiction arrive. Let somebody receive the promotion you wanted. Let your child embarrass you publicly. Let your spouse misunderstand you. Let a friend disappoint you. Let the car break, the schedule collapse, and the bill arrive together. Then the orchard gets inspected. The flesh reaches for wrath, envy, accusation, resentment, and self-pity. The Spirit produces a different crop.

This is why the home often provides a more accurate spiritual measurement than the platform. Family members see the unedited version. They know whether patience exists after a long day, whether gentleness survives disagreement, whether temperance controls the tongue, whether joy disappears when convenience disappears, and whether love still

serves when nobody says thank you. A preacher's congregation may hear his best sermons; his wife hears his worst moods. A teacher's class may see his Bible knowledge; his children know whether the Book ever reaches his temper. This is not an argument for perfection, because no believer has arrived. It is an argument for honesty. If spirituality exists only where strangers can admire it, the fruit inspector should probably look more closely at the tree.

Fruit also becomes visible over time. One bad reaction does not erase every evidence of spiritual growth, and one impressive afternoon does not establish maturity. Look at the direction of the life. Does conviction produce confession? Does failure lead to correction? Is the believer growing easier to entreat, slower to anger, more faithful, more thankful, less controlled by appetite, and more concerned with Christ than self? Second Peter 3:18 says, "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Growth is expected. The mature tree bears more than the sapling because life has had time to work. The Christian should never excuse barren branches by saying nobody is perfect. Nobody expects perfection from an orchard in February, but if July comes for twenty years and nothing ever grows, eventually somebody should ask whether the tree is alive.

## **Conclusion**

Galatians 5 leaves the believer with a standard much harder to fake than religious excitement. The Holy Ghost produces fruit. Love when self would rather retaliate. Joy when circumstances refuse to cooperate. Peace when the world is noisy. Longsuffering when people are difficult. Gentleness when strength could crush. Goodness when nobody is watching. Faith when sight has nothing encouraging to report. Meekness when pride wants the spotlight. Temperance when appetite demands the throne. None of those requires a stage. All of them require the Spirit's government. A man can learn the language of revival, copy the mannerisms of a preacher, imitate a shout, repeat another person's testimony, and manufacture enough emotion to shake a pew. He cannot manufacture Galatians 5 for long. The home will expose the factory.

That does not mean the Christian measures salvation by producing enough fruit to earn confidence before God. Salvation rests in Jesus Christ, not in the believer's ability to keep a spiritual produce stand fully stocked. We are saved "by grace...through faith" (Ephesians 2:8), sealed by the Holy Ghost, and accepted in Christ. Fruit belongs to the walk, not the purchase price of eternal life. Yet grace that saves also teaches and transforms. The same Spirit who seals the believer works to conform him increasingly to Christ. When the flesh wins a battle, confess it. When fruit is lacking, stop making excuses and yield. When progress appears, give God the glory instead of polishing the apple until pride can see its reflection. The fruit belongs to the Spirit.

So stop asking whether the Holy Ghost was present merely because a meeting became loud. Ask what remained when it ended. Did love go home? Did joy survive Monday? Did peace enter the argument? Did longsuffering last beyond the first irritation? Did gentleness govern correction? Did goodness do anything practical? Did faith remain when the answer was delayed? Did meekness survive being overlooked? Did temperance close the mouth before wrath escaped? That is where spiritual life becomes visible. Fruit cannot be stapled on, shouted into existence, or borrowed from somebody else's branch. It grows where the Holy Ghost governs a yielded life. The flesh can put on a show for an evening. The Spirit grows an orchard that still bears fruit when the building is empty, the lights are off, and nobody but God is watching.

## **7 of 10 — Walking in the Spirit — Led by the Spirit, Not by Every Voice in Your Head**

**Key Passage: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Romans 8:14)**

Romans 8:14 has probably had more private messages stuffed into it than the verse ever volunteered to carry. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Somebody reads that and immediately imagines an invisible voice giving minute-by-minute instructions about whom to marry, where to move, what car to buy, which business to start, what stranger to confront, and what private prophecy to announce before lunch. Then come the five words that supposedly settle every question: “God told me to do it.” Once that sentence is spoken, disagreement is treated almost like blasphemy. But Romans 8:14 does not say the sons of God are those who hear the most voices. The immediate context speaks of believers mortifying “the deeds of the body” through the Spirit. The leading of the Spirit is first connected with holiness, sonship, obedience, and deliverance from the government of the flesh, not with turning Christianity into a supernatural scavenger hunt.

The Holy Ghost who inspired Scripture does not develop amnesia when He leads a Christian. He does not write one thing in the Book and whisper the opposite into somebody's ear on Tuesday afternoon. Jesus called Him “the Spirit of truth” (John 16:13). Ephesians 6:17 calls Scripture “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Second Peter 1:21 says holy men of God “spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” The Author of the Bible is not competing with His own Book. If a supposed leading contradicts Scripture, excuses sin, violates Christian responsibility, feeds pride, bypasses plain wisdom, or requires twisting a verse until it screams, the Christian does not need three days of fasting to identify the source. God has already ruled. The safest believer is not the

one with the largest collection of private messages. It is the one who knows what God publicly wrote and has enough humility to obey it.

This matters because the human heart is extremely talented at dressing personal desire in religious clothes. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Yet people speak about “following your heart” as though God installed an infallible navigation system behind the ribs. A Christian wants something badly, thinks about it constantly, feels excited when imagining it, and eventually announces that God is leading. Maybe He is. Maybe He is not. Intensity does not prove origin. Desire can shout. Fear can shout. Pride can shout. Imagination can shout. The flesh has learned enough church vocabulary to begin sentences with “The Lord laid it on my heart.” Biblical leading must therefore be tested, not merely felt. The Holy Ghost is not offended by examination according to the Book He inspired. Counterfeit guidance usually is. Truth never needs darkness in order to survive inspection.

### **1. Romans 8 Defines Leading Before Religious Imagination Does**

Romans 8:13 comes immediately before our key verse: “if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” Then verse 14 says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” The word “For” joins the thoughts. The Spirit’s leading is connected with the believer’s new relationship to sin, holiness, and sonship. He leads away from the rule of the flesh. He leads the Christian to live as someone who belongs to God. Verse 15 continues with the Spirit of adoption, and verse 16 says, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” Paul is teaching Christian identity and spiritual life, not giving instructions on how to obtain a private heavenly weather report before every decision. Start with the context and half the mystical fog blows away before breakfast.

That does not mean the Holy Ghost never directs individual believers in particular circumstances. Acts plainly records specific guidance in apostolic history, and God certainly works providentially in the lives of His people. But doctrine must be built with doctrinal precision. We are not apostles waiting for inspired revelation to complete the New Testament. Paul could receive revelation that became Scripture; you and I are commanded to read what God finished giving. The Church Age believer possesses a completed biblical authority by which every claim is judged. Second Timothy 3:16–17 says Scripture equips “the man of God” so “that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” If the Book thoroughly furnishes the man of God, he need not live spiritually underfurnished until a private whisper arrives.

The leading of the Spirit therefore begins with revealed truth. If God says, “Flee fornication” (1 Corinthians 6:18), you do not need leading about whether adultery might be His special will for you. If God says, “Be ye kind one to another” (Ephesians 4:32), you do not need a sign before forgiving. If God says, “Lie not one to another” (Colossians 3:9), no circumstance converts dishonesty into spiritual guidance. Much of what Christians call “seeking God’s will” is sometimes delaying obedience to God’s word. The speed limit is printed on the sign, but the driver wants a private revelation authorizing eighty-five. The first mark of being led by the Spirit is not receiving information nobody else has. It is obeying information every Bible reader already has.

## **2. The Holy Ghost Never Leads Contrary to the Holy Bible**

Jesus said in John 17:17, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” The Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of truth, and the word is called truth. There is no civil war in the Godhead. The Spirit does not lead contrary to Scripture because the Spirit inspired Scripture. That principle provides the Christian with an objective standard stronger than emotion. Feelings change with sleep, hunger, hormones, pressure, money, weather, praise, criticism, and whether the coffee maker worked. The Bible stays put. Psalm 119:89 says, “For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.” Settled truth is exactly what unstable creatures need. A compass is useful because north does not move every time the traveler gets emotional.

Consider how often “God told me” is used to shield something Scripture would expose. A married person suddenly believes God has provided a “soulmate” who happens to be somebody else’s spouse. A church member believes God is leading him to spread a rumor he never verified. A father abandons obligations because he feels called to some grand project that makes ordinary responsibility look boring. A self-appointed prophet predicts an event, misses it, and receives another message explaining why the first message was not technically wrong. Apparently heaven now operates like a cable company revising the service agreement after the bill arrives. Scripture gives a simpler test: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). God does not ask Christians to check their brains at the sanctuary door.

The Bereans were praised because they “searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). Think about that. They checked apostolic preaching by Scripture available to them. Paul did not rebuke them for lacking spiritual sensitivity. God called them noble. Examination is not unbelief when God commands examination. If somebody announces, “Do not question this; God told me,” the claim has already moved into dangerous territory. The Christian is obligated to test doctrine, claims, teaching, impressions, and supposed guidance against Scripture. First John 4:1 says, “believe not

every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.” Biblical faith is not gullibility baptized. The Holy Ghost produces discernment, not spiritual credulity.

### **3. Your Heart Is Not the Holy Ghost**

One of the most dangerous substitutions in modern Christianity is treating personal feeling as divine speech. “I have peace about it” becomes equivalent to “God commanded it.” But Jonah probably felt considerably better after finding a ship headed toward Tarshish. He paid the fare, found transportation, went below deck, and fell asleep during a storm. Circumstances lined up. His emotions were calm enough to sleep. He was still running directly opposite God’s command. Peace alone is therefore no infallible compass. A conscience can be weak, defiled, or even seared according to Scripture. Feelings can be strong and wrong. The flesh can feel wonderfully peaceful while doing precisely what it wanted all along. If inner calm were proof of righteousness, some of history’s greatest villains would qualify as spiritual giants.

The heart’s deceitfulness means desire must be examined. Psalm 139:23–24 says, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts.” That prayer assumes a man may not fully understand what is moving him. We are remarkably skilled at manufacturing noble reasons for selfish choices. Pride says, “I am standing for principle,” when it is defending ego. Fear says, “I am using wisdom,” when it is refusing obedience. Covetousness says, “I am planning for the future,” when it is worshipping money. Laziness says, “I am waiting on God,” while avoiding work. Ambition says, “I only want a larger platform for the Lord,” while carefully checking how many people noticed the platform. The flesh does not always arrive wearing horns. Sometimes it carries a Bible and explains how convenient its preferred interpretation happens to be.

That is why Proverbs 3:5 says, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.” The command is not to worship intuition but to distrust self-sufficiency. Verse 6 says, “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” Direction begins with acknowledgment of God, not deification of instinct. A Christian should certainly pay attention to conscience, inward restraint, burden, and spiritual concern, but those things must be instructed by Scripture. A conscience trained by error can object to righteousness; a conscience trained by truth becomes a useful witness. The Holy Ghost renews the mind through biblical truth. He does not ask the believer to mistake every thought that floats through consciousness for a telegram from heaven.

### **4. Wisdom Is Not Less Spiritual Than an Impression**

James 1:5 says, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.” That verse assumes Christians will face decisions where no chapter-and-verse command names the exact

choice. Scripture tells you whom not to marry spiritually, but it does not print the name of your future spouse. It teaches honesty in work, but it does not list which employer to choose. It teaches stewardship, but it does not tell you whether to buy the blue car or the gray one. In those areas God provides wisdom. Biblical wisdom gathers truth, weighs circumstances, examines responsibility, seeks counsel, considers consequences, prays, and makes a decision. That process may look less exciting than announcing that a voice told you which house to purchase, but it is considerably harder to manipulate.

Proverbs is full of wisdom because God apparently believes His children should learn how to think. “In the multitude of counsellors there is safety” (Proverbs 11:14). “The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going” (Proverbs 14:15). “Every purpose is established by counsel” (Proverbs 20:18). None of that sounds like spiritual paralysis while waiting for a mysterious impression. A prudent Christian investigates. He asks questions. He counts the cost. Jesus Himself said, “which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost?” (Luke 14:28). Apparently using arithmetic does not quench the Spirit. Some people could avoid years of pain if they consulted a calculator before asking for a cloud formation.

Sanctified judgment grows as the mind is renewed. Romans 12:2 connects transformation “by the renewing of your mind” with proving “what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Mature Christians become better at applying biblical principles because Scripture reshapes how they judge. Hebrews 5:14 speaks of those “who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” Discernment is exercised. Wisdom is cultivated. The Spirit can use a mind saturated with the Book. He does not need the mind switched off before He can lead. Christianity is not God bypassing human faculties; it is God bringing them under truth. A Spirit-led mind becomes more biblically sensible, not less.

## **5. Providence Can Guide Without Becoming Superstition**

God certainly directs circumstances. Proverbs 16:9 says, “A man’s heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.” Paul experienced doors opening and closing in ministry. In Acts 16, the apostolic company was forbidden to preach in certain regions and eventually directed toward Macedonia. God rules providentially over places, opportunities, delays, meetings, circumstances, and timing. A Christian should recognize that his life is not outside divine government. Romans 8:28 assures believers that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Providence is real because God is sovereign, not because coincidence suddenly became Scripture.

The danger comes when providence is converted into superstition. A Christian asks God for a sign, sees three red cars before breakfast, and concludes heaven has authorized the loan. A bird lands on the fence while he is considering a move, so now the bird has accidentally entered prophetic ministry. Numbers repeat, songs play at convenient moments, doors happen to open, and ordinary events are pressed into service as private omens. Gideon's fleece in Judges 6 is often borrowed without its historical setting as though God commanded Church Age believers to invent tests for Him. He did not. The Bible warns against superstition and provides something better: revealed truth, prayer, wisdom, counsel, responsibility, and providence interpreted humbly rather than dogmatically.

Open doors must also be evaluated biblically because an opportunity is not automatically God's approval. Jonah found a ship to Tarshish. There was transportation available for disobedience. The existence of an opening proves only that an opening exists. Likewise, a closed door does not always mean God permanently forbids a thing; sometimes timing changes, circumstances test patience, or human opposition creates delay. Paul wrote of "a great door and effectual" being opened while adding, "there are many adversaries" (1 Corinthians 16:9). Apparently opposition did not cancel the open door. Providence should therefore be read alongside Scripture, wisdom, duty, prayer, and godly counsel. Do not build doctrine out of door hinges.

## **6. Prayer Seeks God's Will; It Does Not Recruit God to Endorse Ours**

Biblical guidance requires prayer because dependence upon God is part of walking in the Spirit. Philippians 4:6 says, "in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." We bring requests, not commands disguised as prayers. Prayer should expose our will to God rather than merely attach God's name to our will. Jesus provided the perfect pattern in Gethsemane: "nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). If the sinless Son submitted His human will to the Father, fallen Christians might survive doing the same. Prayer is not rubbing a lamp until providence produces what we already decided we deserve.

This submission matters because strong desire can imitate certainty. A person prays repeatedly for one particular result until the result begins to feel inevitable. Then if circumstances move in that direction, he declares confirmation; if they move the other way, he assumes warfare. In that system personal desire can never lose. Heads, God said yes; tails, Satan interfered. Biblical prayer leaves room for God to say no, wait, or something entirely different. Paul asked three times for the thorn in the flesh to depart, and God answered, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Paul did not declare

the unwanted answer invalid because it contradicted his preference. Spiritual maturity is revealed when God's answer corrects our request and we still call Him wise.

Prayer also clears the noise because it brings motives before God. James 4:3 warns, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." Imagine that—a prayer can be sincere, religious, repeated, and still be driven by lust. Prayer itself does not sanctify the motive automatically. The Christian needs the Book to examine what he asks and why he asks it. Do I want this because it serves Christ or because it enlarges me? Am I avoiding a duty and calling the escape guidance? Am I impatient? Am I afraid? Am I trying to force an answer because uncertainty makes me uncomfortable? Prayer that seeks leading must be willing to have self exposed, not merely plans approved.

## **7. Obey What Is Clear Before Demanding Guidance About What Is Hidden**

Deuteronomy 29:29 says, in Israel's historical covenant setting, "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us." The principle is unmistakable: God has not told man everything, but man is responsible for what God has revealed. Christians often reverse the priorities. They obsess over the hidden will of God while neglecting the written will of God. "Should I move to another state?" may be uncertain. "Should I forgive my brother?" is not. "Which career should I pursue?" may require wisdom. "Should I tell the truth?" does not. "Does God want me to take this opportunity?" may require prayer and judgment. "Does God want me to avoid fornication?" already has an answer.

First Thessalonians 4:3 says, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." There is one piece of divine guidance nobody needs to discover. First Thessalonians 5:18 says, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." First Peter 2:15 identifies doing well as "the will of God." Scripture contains enormous amounts of revealed guidance. Yet a man can ignore sanctification, complain constantly, neglect known duties, refuse forgiveness, live carnally, and still spend hours asking God whether the next job offer is His perfect will. That is like refusing to obey ten road signs while demanding heaven send an angel to explain the next exit.

Faithfulness in clear duties also prepares the believer to handle uncertain decisions wisely. Psalm 119:105 says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." A lamp often illuminates the next steps, not the entire road to the horizon. God gives enough light to obey. Christians sometimes want a twenty-year itinerary before they will take one obedient step today. Scripture usually does not work that way. Abraham went out "not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11:8), but he knew Who had spoken. We possess God's written word and should walk by the light provided. The Spirit-led life is less about

possessing secret information concerning the distant future than about obeying known truth in the present. God does not owe us tomorrow's map while we ignore today's lamp.

## **Conclusion**

Being led by the Spirit is neither mystical chaos nor cold mechanical religion. The Holy Ghost is alive, personal, active, and fully capable of directing the believer. But His leading is consistent with His Book, His character, His truth, and His purpose of conforming Christians to Christ. He uses Scripture, wisdom, prayer, providence, sanctified judgment, conscience trained by truth, counsel, responsibility, and circumstances. He leads believers away from the dominion of the flesh and toward holiness. He does not need to contradict Scripture to prove He is supernatural. The greatest supernatural work may be taking a naturally proud man and teaching him humility, taking an impulsive man and producing temperance, taking a fearful man and producing faith, or taking a selfish man and teaching him to obey when nobody applauds.

The phrase "God told me" should therefore be used with tremendous caution. God has spoken, and the safest place to put those words is beside a verse He actually wrote. Where Scripture is silent about a particular personal decision, humility is better than false certainty. Say you prayed. Say you believe this is wise. Say circumstances appear to point in a direction. Say you have sought counsel and intend to proceed unless God closes the way. There is no shame in acknowledging that judgment is judgment. But do not forge God's signature at the bottom of your preference and demand everybody salute the document. False certainty is not faith. Sometimes the most spiritual sentence a Christian can speak is, "I do not know exactly what God will do, but I know what His word says, and I intend to obey that."

So be led by the Spirit, but learn what that means from Scripture rather than religious folklore. Mortify the flesh. Fill the mind with the Book. Pray with submission. Seek wisdom. Examine motives. Use sound judgment. Receive counsel. Watch providence without turning circumstances into omens. Let conscience be trained by truth. Obey what is already written before demanding secret instructions about what is not. Not every thought that enters your head came down from the throne, not every strong feeling is a divine burden, and not every convenient opportunity is an open door from God. The safest Christian is not the one claiming the most voices. It is the one who can open a King James Bible, put his finger on what God actually said, and then walk in that truth whether he receives a special feeling about it or not.

## 8 of 10 — Walking in the Spirit — Praying in the Holy Ghost Without Turning Prayer Into Mysticism

**Key Passage: “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” (Ephesians 6:18)**

Ephesians 6:18 does not introduce prayer as a religious trance, a secret vocabulary, or an emotional gear that a Christian shifts into after the music gets soft enough. Paul says, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,” and he says it while discussing the whole armour of God. The setting is warfare, truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, and “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Then comes prayer. That context alone should keep the Christian from turning “praying in the Spirit” into mystical theater. The man wearing the armour is awake, alert, watching, persevering, supplicating, and using the word of God. He is not emptying his mind so something mysterious can take over. He is engaging God intelligently in the middle of a spiritual battle. Prayer in the Spirit is not less biblical consciousness. It is biblical consciousness brought deliberately into the presence of God.

Jude 20 says essentially the same thing: “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.” Notice what surrounds the expression. There is “your most holy faith.” There is building up. There is keeping yourselves in the love of God. There is looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing in the passage tells the believer to abandon understanding and enter some private spiritual frequency. The Holy Ghost did not inspire a Bible full of words and then decide the highest form of prayer would occur when words cease to mean anything. Biblical prayer involves truth understood, believed, remembered, confessed, thanked God for, pleaded upon, and submitted to. Mysticism wants a secret chamber nobody can examine. Scripture turns the lights on. If prayer supposedly becomes more spiritual as biblical understanding decreases, somebody has placed the ladder against the wrong wall.

Romans 8:26–27 gives the glorious reason a believer can pray without pretending omniscience: “the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.” That is honest Christianity. Sometimes we do not know what to ask. Sometimes the burden is real while the answer is hidden. Sometimes we can see the trouble but cannot see what God intends to do through it. Yet the verse does not tell us to invent syllables to compensate for our ignorance. It says “the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” If they “cannot be uttered,” turning them into utterances requires an impressive amount of determination to make the verse say its opposite. The Holy Ghost knows what we cannot know, and He carries the

believer's weakness before God according to the will of God. That is better than a secret prayer technique. That is divine help.

## **1. Prayer Begins With Access, Not Atmosphere**

Before discussing how the Spirit helps prayer, we should remember why a Christian can approach God at all. Ephesians 2:18 says, "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." There is the order plainly stated. Through Christ, by the Spirit, unto the Father. Prayer is not man climbing a mystical staircase until he achieves the correct spiritual vibration. Access was purchased by Jesus Christ. Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace," and the "therefore" rests upon our great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God. The believer does not enter because he prayed himself into a special state. He enters because Christ opened the way. Calvary did more for prayer than ten thousand emotional experiences ever could. You do not have to pound on heaven's door until God recognizes your voice. The blood of Christ already secured your standing.

This also means praying "in Jesus' name" is more than attaching a phrase to the end of a request like a postage stamp. John 16:23 records Christ saying, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." To ask in His name is to approach on the basis of who He is and in harmony with His authority, not to use His name as a religious password for whatever the flesh has decided it wants. A man can say "in Jesus' name" after asking for something selfish, foolish, or contrary to Scripture and still be asking amiss. James 4:3 says exactly that: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." Christ's name is not a rubber stamp for carnal shopping lists.

The Holy Ghost therefore directs prayer Christward and Godward, not inward toward fascination with the prayer experience itself. John 16:14 says of the Spirit, "He shall glorify me." When the Spirit governs prayer, Christ becomes central. His will matters. His word matters. His glory matters. His cross matters. His church matters. His coming matters. The believer becomes less interested in whether the prayer felt impressive and more interested in whether it honored God. Religious flesh wants to leave the prayer closet with a story about what happened in the prayer closet. The Spirit would rather send a man out obedient. The greatest prayer meeting is not necessarily the one where everybody felt something unusual. It may be the one where somebody finally surrendered something he had been refusing to obey for six months.

## **2. The Spirit Helps Our Infirmities Without Replacing Our Understanding**

Romans 8:26 begins with weakness: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." That word ought to comfort every believer who has ever sat before God without knowing how to

frame the burden. We are finite. God is not. We see one corner of the matter; God sees beginning, middle, end, consequences, motives, timing, and eternity. A Christian may sincerely ask for removal when God intends endurance, for escape when God intends growth, for an open door when God intends protection through a closed one. Paul himself prayed three times for the thorn in his flesh to depart, and the answer was, “My grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Paul’s ignorance concerning the desired outcome did not make prayer worthless. God used the prayer to teach him something greater than the request.

Verse 27 then says the Spirit “maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” That last phrase is the anchor: “according to the will of God.” The Holy Ghost never joins the flesh in trying to persuade God to bless rebellion. He does not take a selfish request, decorate it with religious emotion, and sneak it through heaven’s back entrance. His intercession agrees perfectly with God. That means Spirit-governed prayer increasingly moves the believer toward submission rather than manipulation. Prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance; it is bringing our needs before a Father who already knows them while submitting ourselves to His wisdom. Matthew 6:8 says, “your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.” We pray not because God lacks information but because relationship, dependence, worship, obedience, and fellowship demand it.

Understanding still matters. First Corinthians 14:15 says, “I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.” Paul does not set spirit against understanding as though one becomes more holy when the mind goes dark. In that chapter he is regulating spiritual gifts in the assembly, insisting upon edification, interpretation, and order. “God is not the author of confusion” (1 Corinthians 14:33). Acts 2 shows supernatural tongues as actual languages understood by hearers from different nations. Whatever somebody wants to do with the difficult details of Corinth, one principle cannot be escaped: Paul repeatedly values understanding. The Holy Ghost created the human mind and is quite capable of using it. Biblical prayer is not a contest to see who can become least conscious of what he is saying.

### **3. The Word of God Gives Prayer Its Vocabulary and Boundaries**

Ephesians 6 places “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” immediately before the command about prayer. That arrangement matters. Spirit-governed prayer and Scripture-governed thinking belong together. The more the Bible fills a believer’s mind, the more substantial his prayers become. Instead of merely repeating, “Bless me, bless mine, bless everybody,” he begins praying with biblical categories. He prays for wisdom because James tells him to ask. He prays for boldness because Acts shows believers doing it. He prays for open doors for the word because Paul requested it. He prays for spiritual

understanding, worthy walking, fruitfulness, strength, unity, holiness, thanksgiving, and steadfastness because those things fill the epistles. Scripture gives prayer bones. Without it, prayer easily becomes jelly—religious, sincere, and unable to stand up.

The Psalms show how thoroughly Scripture can train a man to pray honestly without becoming irreverent. David praises, confesses, asks, laments, remembers, thanks, fears, rejoices, waits, and cries for deliverance. Prayer in the Bible is not artificial sweetness spoken in a stained-glass voice. “How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever?” (Psalm 13:1) is prayer. “Create in me a clean heart, O God” (Psalm 51:10) is prayer. “Search me, O God, and know my heart” (Psalm 139:23) is prayer. Scripture teaches the believer to bring the whole matter before God while allowing God’s truth to govern the response. Prayer should be honest without becoming rebellious. God already knows what is in the heart; pretending otherwise does not fool Him. It merely makes the prayer meeting a costume party.

The word also puts boundaries around what may be requested. First John 5:14 says, “if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.” That is not a blank cheque for appetite. A Christian praying in harmony with Scripture will not ask God to bless adultery, revenge, dishonesty, greed, doctrinal compromise, or disobedience. Neither will he confidently promise himself things God never promised him. Scripture protects prayer from fantasy. Religious flesh loves to convert desire into a divine guarantee: want it strongly, confess it boldly, repeat it often, and God supposedly becomes obligated to deliver. That turns prayer into spiritual extortion. God is not a vending machine, faith is not a coin, and prayer is not the button that forces heaven to dispense your selection.

#### **4. Praying in the Holy Ghost Is Not Religious Babbling**

The idea that prayer becomes more spiritual when language becomes unintelligible runs headfirst into Paul’s concern for edification and understanding. First Corinthians 14:9 asks, “except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?” In the assembly, Paul demands order and interpretation. He does not treat incomprehensibility as proof that heaven has taken over. Quite the opposite. Verse 19 says, “I had rather speak five words with my understanding...than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.” Five understandable words beat ten thousand unusable ones for teaching others. That arithmetic should sober anybody who thinks spiritual value increases in direct proportion to how little anybody understands.

This does not deny the genuine supernatural gift God gave in the apostolic period. Acts 2 is clear that men from multiple regions said, “we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2:11). The miracle produced understanding across language

barriers. The gift was not random vocalization being praised because nobody knew what it meant. In Corinth, where tongues required regulation, Paul imposed limits, interpretation, and order. He even said, “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40). Modern religious confusion sometimes behaves as though decency and order are the two surest signs that the Holy Ghost left the building. Paul apparently missed that seminar. The Spirit who inspired the rules is not hindered by them.

“Praying in the Holy Ghost” in Jude 20 therefore should not be kidnapped from Jude’s argument and shipped into a system of mystical vocal techniques. Jude is exhorting believers amid apostasy. He tells them to remember apostolic words, build themselves up on their “most holy faith,” pray in the Holy Ghost, keep themselves in the love of God, look for the mercy of Christ, and contend with wisdom for others. The entire paragraph breathes discernment, truth, perseverance, and holiness. Nothing suggests that the solution to apostasy is turning off the understanding. Apostasy flourishes when Christians stop thinking biblically. Jude’s answer is the opposite: remember truth, build on faith, pray under the Spirit’s government, and remain anchored while the mockers walk “after their own ungodly lusts.”

## **5. Confession Clears What Sin Clutters**

Prayer in the Spirit cannot be separated from the believer’s practical relationship to sin. Ephesians 4:30 says, “grieve not the holy Spirit of God,” and the surrounding verses identify lying, corrupt communication, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, and malice. A Christian sealed by the Holy Ghost can grieve the Holy Ghost. That does not mean he becomes unsaved every time he sins; the same verse says he is sealed “unto the day of redemption.” It means fellowship is affected by disobedience. A believer cannot knowingly cherish rebellion and simultaneously pretend his prayer life is unhindered merely because he can produce spiritual-sounding words. Psalm 66:18 states the principle plainly: “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” God is not impressed by eloquence wrapped around stubbornness.

First John 1:9 gives the believer the practical answer: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Confession means agreeing with God about the sin, not editing the charge sheet until the flesh looks innocent. “Lord, forgive me if I possibly offended somebody who may have misunderstood my tone” is sometimes a twenty-four-word method of avoiding three honest words: “I was wrong.” The flesh can turn confession into a press conference. Biblical confession does not blame weather, childhood, fatigue, personality, another person’s provocation, or Mercury being in whichever neighborhood the astrologers claim it rented this week. God names sin; the Christian agrees and forsakes it.

Confession also keeps prayer from becoming performance. The man who meets God honestly does not need to maintain a spiritual reputation before Him. God already knows the file. Hebrews 4:13 says, “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” That truth is terrifying to hypocrisy and comforting to sincerity. You can tell God exactly where you failed because He knew before you arrived. The Holy Ghost convicts not to push the believer into theatrical shame but to bring him back into truthful fellowship and obedience. Prayer becomes deeper when pretense dies. God is not looking for a polished speech. He wants truth “in the inward parts” (Psalm 51:6). The prayer closet is a poor place for a costume because the One listening sees through it anyway.

## **6. Thanksgiving, Intercession, and Perseverance Keep Prayer From Becoming Self-Absorption**

Ephesians 6:18 says, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,” then adds, “with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” Spirit-governed prayer widens the circle. The flesh naturally prays about itself because self is its favorite subject. My problem, my plan, my need, my future, my comfort, my answer. Paul says pray “for all saints.” In verse 19 he even asks prayer for himself that utterance and boldness would be given him to preach the gospel. Intercession turns the believer outward. He begins carrying missionaries, pastors, families, suffering Christians, children, churches, rulers, the lost, and fellow believers before God. A prayer life consisting entirely of personal requests eventually sounds like a customer-service line.

Thanksgiving corrects the same self-centered drift. Philippians 4:6 says, “in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” Colossians 4:2 says, “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.” Thanksgiving remembers what God has already done while asking for what has not yet happened. It keeps need from erasing memory. The flesh can receive ninety-nine mercies and spend the afternoon furious about number one hundred. Thanksgiving drags the first ninety-nine back into the room. It reminds the believer of salvation, Scripture, providence, answered prayer, daily bread, Christian fellowship, mercy, and a future secured in Christ. Gratitude does not deny trouble; it refuses to let trouble rewrite the entire record of God’s faithfulness.

Then Paul says perseverance. Prayer is not always answered on the schedule the flesh finds convenient. Jesus taught that “men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1). Paul says, “Continue in prayer” (Colossians 4:2). Some burdens remain for years. Some loved ones resist truth. Some doors stay closed. Some afflictions continue. Some answers come in forms we did not expect. Perseverance keeps praying without pretending repetition manipulates God. Christ warned against “vain repetitions” (Matthew 6:7), not faithful

repeated petition. There is a difference between mindless formula and persistent faith. One assumes the right quantity of words can force an answer; the other continues trusting God because His character remains true while the answer remains unseen.

## **7. Spirit-Governed Prayer Ends With “Thy Will Be Done”**

No prayer exposes the difference between flesh and Spirit more clearly than the prayer of Jesus Christ in Gethsemane. “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42). There is no rebellion in Christ, yet there is genuine submission. The request is stated, and the Father’s will remains supreme. That pattern should correct the modern notion that faith means refusing to acknowledge any answer except the one requested. Sometimes faith says, “Deliver me.” Sometimes greater faith says, “If You do not remove it, give me grace to honor You through it.” Submission does not weaken prayer. It places prayer where it belongs—beneath the wisdom of God instead of above it.

Paul learned that in 2 Corinthians 12. He besought the Lord thrice concerning his thorn, “that it might depart from me.” The answer was not departure. It was sufficient grace. Paul then stopped trying to make God agree with his preferred solution and said, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” That is Spirit-governed prayer producing Spirit-governed thinking. God changed the petitioner when He did not change the circumstance. Many Christians would call that unanswered prayer because they define answer as getting what they ordered. Heaven defines success differently. Sometimes the answer is not a changed road but changed feet strong enough to walk it.

Praying in the Spirit therefore produces surrender, not spiritual entitlement. It says, “Lord, here is the need. Here is what I desire. Here is what Scripture permits me to ask. But You know what I do not know, see what I cannot see, and intend what will glorify Christ.” That prayer can be bold without being arrogant, specific without being presumptuous, persistent without being manipulative, emotional without becoming irrational, and confident without pretending omniscience. The flesh uses prayer to recruit God into its plans. The Spirit uses prayer to bring the believer’s plans under God. One tries to move the throne. The other bows before it.

## **Conclusion**

Praying in the Holy Ghost is not discovering a hidden spiritual frequency reserved for people who have learned the correct sounds, atmosphere, or emotional technique. It is the normal privilege of a saved believer approaching the Father through Jesus Christ under the government and assistance of the indwelling Holy Ghost. It is prayer shaped by Scripture,

strengthened by faith, cleansed by confession, enlarged through intercession, seasoned with thanksgiving, sustained by perseverance, and submitted to the will of God. It can whisper beside a hospital bed, groan silently under a burden, rejoice over answered prayer, confess sin in a locked room, or plead for another believer thousands of miles away. Heaven does not need amplification. God heard Hannah when her lips moved and her voice was not heard (1 Samuel 1:13). Volume has never been the postage rate for prayer.

Romans 8 gives the believer enormous comfort precisely because our prayers are imperfect. “We know not what we should pray for as we ought,” but the Spirit knows. Our ignorance does not defeat His intercession. Our limited vocabulary does not limit His understanding. Our inability to see tomorrow does not blind Him to God’s purpose. The Holy Ghost is not standing beside the believer waiting for him to unlock some advanced technique. He already indwells the saved man. He already knows the mind of God. He already makes intercession “according to the will of God.” That truth should produce humility and confidence at the same time. Humility, because we do not know enough to dictate outcomes. Confidence, because God has provided help exactly where our weakness begins.

So pray. Pray with an open Bible. Pray with understanding. Pray honestly. Pray specifically. Pray for others. Pray with thanksgiving. Pray when you feel strong and when you feel spiritually dry. Pray when the answer comes quickly and when heaven appears silent. Confess what the Spirit exposes. Believe what the Book says. Ask boldly through Jesus Christ. Submit the outcome to the Father. Keep watching. Keep persevering. Keep your armour on and your sword near. The Holy Ghost does not need mystical theater to carry a prayer through the ceiling. There is no ceiling to Him. The believer already has access to the Father through the Son, and the Spirit already knows how to take our weakest prayers where they need to go.

## **9 of 10 — Walking in the Spirit — One Spirit, One Body: Spiritual Unity Without Doctrinal Surrender**

**Key Passage: “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”  
(Ephesians 4:3)**

Ephesians 4 commands believers to be “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” and notice what the verse does not say. It does not command Christians to manufacture unity, invent unity, negotiate unity, vote unity into existence, or create unity by shaving the sharp edges off every doctrine until nobody believes enough to disagree. The

unity already exists because the Holy Ghost created it. Saved believers have been placed into one body under one Head, Jesus Christ. Paul says “keep” the unity, not construct it. That little word ruins an enormous amount of religious machinery. Men build federations, councils, movements, alliances, statements, conferences, and denominational handshakes, then congratulate themselves for accomplishing what God supposedly forgot to do. But spiritual unity is not produced by organizational glue. God made the body. Our responsibility is to walk worthy of what He already made.

The context immediately defines the character required to preserve that unity: “With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love” (Ephesians 4:2). That list is not accidental. Most church conflicts do not begin because somebody denied the bodily resurrection. They begin because somebody’s ego got stepped on with a church shoe. Somebody was overlooked, corrected, interrupted, contradicted, seated in the wrong place, left off a committee, or denied the privilege of having the last word. Then suddenly every verse about contending for the faith gets drafted into a private war over wounded pride. The flesh can turn a minor offense into the Council of Jerusalem if you give it an afternoon. Spiritual unity requires believers strong enough to humble themselves, patient enough to bear with imperfect people, and secure enough in Christ that every disagreement does not have to become a declaration of war.

Yet biblical unity is not softness toward doctrine. The same chapter that says “unity of the Spirit” says “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” and warns against believers being “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:5,14). God apparently never received the modern memo explaining that doctrine is the enemy of unity. In Ephesians 4, doctrine protects unity. Truth gives the body bones. Remove the bones in the name of flexibility and you do not create a healthier body; you create a sack that cannot stand upright. Genuine unity therefore rejects two opposite errors: doctrinal compromise on one side and fleshly combativeness on the other. The Holy Ghost never asks Christians to purchase peace by pawning the truth, and He never authorizes pride to disguise itself as doctrinal courage. Truth without charity can become a club. Charity without truth becomes fog.

### **1. The Spirit Created the Unity Before We Were Asked to Keep It**

First Corinthians 12:13 explains the supernatural basis of Christian unity: “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” The body of Christ is not assembled by human invitation cards. The Holy Ghost places saved believers into that body. Jew and Gentile, bond and free, people from different nations, backgrounds, personalities, abilities, and social conditions are joined in Christ by divine operation. That is why Ephesians 4 begins with something God has already accomplished. Christians do not have to manufacture spiritual

kinship any more than children in the same family have to manufacture a common father. The relationship exists before they decide whether they enjoy one another's personalities. A believer may find another believer difficult, peculiar, immature, or exhausting, but if both belong to Christ, human irritation does not erase divine relationship.

That fact should destroy spiritual snobbery. First Corinthians 12 asks, "If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body," does that remove the foot? No. Neither can "the eye say unto the hand, I have no need of thee" (1 Corinthians 12:21). The body contains difference without surrendering unity. Not every Christian has your gift, temperament, pace, background, preferences, or method. Thank God. A body composed entirely of eyeballs would see wonderfully and accomplish almost nothing else. Yet churches often behave as though spirituality requires everybody to become a copy of the loudest personality in the building. The Holy Ghost produces unity, not uniformity. Unity says different members serve one Head. Uniformity says everybody must look like the same member. One is biblical; the other is an assembly line.

The unity is also spiritual before it is organizational. Two believers can belong to the same denomination and have very little spiritual fellowship if one abandons truth. Conversely, believers separated by geography, culture, and local-church membership may share profound unity in Christ without belonging to one earthly organization. That does not make the local church optional; the New Testament plainly assumes believers assemble, serve, worship, teach, give, discipline, and fellowship locally. But no earthly organization is identical with the entire body of Christ. The Spirit did not surrender His work to a denominational headquarters. The body belongs to Christ. That keeps a church from believing its mailing list is the Lamb's book of life with office hours.

## **2. Seven Ones Leave No Room for an Ecumenical Blender**

Ephesians 4:4–6 gives a magnificent doctrinal backbone: "There is one body, and one Spirit...One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all." Paul does not describe unity by removing doctrine; he describes unity by stating doctrine. One body means Christ does not possess competing spiritual bodies each with a separate Head. One Spirit means spiritual life does not arise from contradictory spirits. One Lord means Jesus Christ is not one option among religious authorities. One faith means biblical Christianity cannot be blended indefinitely with every belief system on earth and still remain the faith delivered in Scripture. Unity has content. Empty the content and the word "unity" becomes a balloon tied to nothing.

"One baptism" belongs in that doctrinal chain and must be handled carefully. In the context of the body and one Spirit, the emphasis is the believer's identification in Christ,

not a claim that water saves the sinner. First Corinthians 12:13 says, “by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” Salvation in this Church Age is by grace through faith, “not of works” (Ephesians 2:8–9). Water baptism has its proper place as an act of obedience and testimony, but the water does not perform the saving operation of the Holy Ghost. A man can go into a baptistry dry and come out wet while remaining just as lost as he entered. The plumber can provide water; only Christ provides eternal life.

“One faith” also means Christians cannot call every doctrinal contradiction a harmless difference merely because the word “unity” sounds pleasant. Paul warned in Galatians 1 against “another gospel,” then immediately clarified that it was “not another” but a perversion of Christ’s gospel. Second Corinthians 11 warns of “another Jesus,” “another spirit,” and “another gospel.” Biblical charity does not require a Christian to pretend those distinctions are unimportant. A bridge built by removing half the bolts may look wonderfully open-minded until traffic arrives. Unity strong enough to bear weight must be anchored to truth. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of truth, not the spirit of theological shrugging.

### **3. Humility Is the Oil That Keeps the Body From Grinding Itself Apart**

Ephesians 4:2 begins with “lowliness and meekness,” qualities the flesh dislikes because both interfere with self-importance. Pride always believes it deserves better treatment, quicker recognition, more consultation, greater influence, and the final word. Put five proud people in a room and unity becomes a hostage negotiation. Humility changes the temperature because it does not enter every conversation carrying a crown. Philippians 2:3 says, “in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.” That does not mean pretending everybody is wiser than you in every subject. It means refusing to make self the center of every relationship. The humble Christian can listen without mentally composing his victory speech.

Meekness is equally necessary because strength without meekness turns correction into demolition. Galatians 6:1 instructs the spiritual believer to restore the one overtaken in a fault “in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” The objective is restoration, not humiliation. A surgeon uses a knife, but he does not swing it across the operating room to prove how sharp it is. Some Christians discover one doctrinal error in another believer and immediately act as though heaven appointed them chief executioner before supper. Truth must correct error, but spiritual correction remembers the corrector is made of the same flesh. Meekness lets truth remain sharp while preventing ego from holding the handle.

Humility also allows a believer to apologize. That sounds elementary until pride gets involved. “I was wrong” may be three of the hardest words the flesh ever pronounces

without adding a paragraph of self-defense. James 5:16 says, “Confess your faults one to another.” Sometimes unity is preserved not by another conference but by one Christian admitting he spoke wrongly, assumed wrongly, judged prematurely, or handled a true matter in a wrong spirit. Pride would rather divide a church than surrender a sentence. The Spirit says bend. The strongest Christian in the room may be the one who can kneel without pretending the floor moved.

#### **4. Longsuffering and Forbearance Handle Imperfect People Without Excusing Sin**

Paul tells believers to walk “with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.” That command assumes other Christians will occasionally require forbearance. What a shock. Apparently salvation did not make everybody easy to live with. Christians possess different backgrounds, levels of maturity, personalities, habits, sensitivities, blind spots, strengths, weaknesses, and rates of growth. A local church is therefore not a showroom filled with finished saints under perfect lighting. It is more like a workshop. Sawdust gets on the floor. Hammers make noise. Something is always being sanded. If you demand a church where nobody ever irritates you, you may eventually have to meet alone—and after a few weeks you may become dissatisfied with the membership.

Forbearance, however, is not permission to ignore serious sin or false doctrine. Love can bear with immaturity while confronting rebellion. First Corinthians 5 required discipline where open fornication was being tolerated. Titus 3:10 says, “A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject.” Second Thessalonians 3 deals with disorderly conduct. The same Bible that commands patience also commands boundaries. Spiritual maturity knows the difference between an irritating preference and a corrupting sin. The flesh usually reverses those priorities: it becomes furious over minor inconveniences and strangely tolerant when serious doctrine collapses. Scripture teaches the opposite. Bear with the brother who sings off-key; do not bear indefinitely with somebody preaching another gospel.

Longsuffering also governs timing. Not every immature Christian needs the entire theological library dropped on his head during his first month after salvation. Paul told the Corinthians they were babes who needed milk because they could not yet bear stronger meat (1 Corinthians 3:1–2). Growth occurs. Teaching requires patience. A mature believer should be able to distinguish between somebody who is learning and somebody who is resisting. The gardener does not scream at the sapling because it lacks the shade of a fifty-year-old oak. He waters it. But he also does not call dead wood healthy merely to spare its feelings. Grace and truth make better gardeners than impatience or compromise.

#### **5. Doctrine Protects Unity From Being Hijacked by Error**

Ephesians 4:11–14 explains why Christ gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers in the unfolding New Testament order: the saints are to be perfected, the ministry accomplished, the body edified, and believers brought toward doctrinal maturity. Verse 14 states the danger plainly: “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.” Doctrinal instability does not strengthen unity; it makes Christians easy prey. A child follows whatever balloon catches his eye. Mature believers know why they believe what they believe. The wind can blow without carrying the house away because the foundation is not attached to a weather vane.

Verse 15 supplies the balance: “speaking the truth in love.” Some people quote “love” as though truth were an embarrassing relative that should wait in the car. Others quote “truth” as though love were liberalism. Paul puts both in the same sentence. Truth without love can become cruelty; love without truth becomes deception with good manners. If a man is walking toward a cliff, love does not affirm his journey because correction might disturb his peace. It warns him. But neither does love shove him over the edge to demonstrate how wrong he was. Biblical correction seeks recovery. The aim is not merely to win the argument but to gain the brother where possible.

Sound doctrine also gives believers something larger than personality around which to unite. Churches become unstable when loyalty attaches primarily to charisma, family connections, traditions, styles, or personalities. Men die. Personalities fail. Trends change. The Book remains. Paul tells Timothy, “Hold fast the form of sound words” (2 Timothy 1:13). Titus 2:1 says, “speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.” When Scripture occupies the center, disagreement can be measured against something objective. Without the Book, every dispute becomes a contest of preference, influence, and volume. The loudest rooster may control the barnyard, but volume has never turned a rooster into a theologian.

## **6. Service Unites the Body When Ego Stops Competing for Attention**

Ephesians 4 describes the body as something that grows through “that which every joint supplieth,” according to the effectual working of every part (Ephesians 4:16). Every part. Christian service is not a spectator arrangement where a handful of visible people perform while everybody else grades the sermon and complains about the temperature. The body works because members serve. One teaches. Another encourages. Another gives. Another helps. Another prays. Another labors quietly where nobody notices until the work stops getting done. The Holy Ghost distributes gifts for edification, not personal branding. First Corinthians 12:7 says the manifestation of the Spirit is given “to every man to profit withal.” Spiritual gifts are tools, not trophies.

Competition corrupts that service. The disciples themselves argued over who would be greatest, proving that religious ambition did not begin with modern ministry conferences. Jesus answered by teaching servanthood. In Mark 10:43 He said, “whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister.” The flesh wants a title; Christ hands it a towel. The flesh counts followers; Christ counts faithfulness. The flesh becomes jealous when another member succeeds; the Spirit rejoices because the body benefits. If another preacher teaches truth effectively, Christ was honored. If another believer receives recognition, the kingdom did not lose money. Envy inside the body is like one hand becoming angry because the other hand picked up the cup.

Serving together also puts disagreements into proper proportion. People fighting shoulder to shoulder for something greater than themselves have less time to inspect one another for minor offenses. Pray together. Evangelize. Teach children. Help struggling families. Support missions. Visit the sick. Study Scripture. Work. A church that does nothing eventually develops enough leisure to turn carpet color into eschatology. Activity alone is no cure for carnality, but biblical service redirects energy toward Christ’s purposes. Unity deepens when believers stop asking, “How am I being treated?” every five minutes and begin asking, “How can I help the body obey its Head?”

## **7. Peace Has Boundaries, and Separation Can Be Biblical**

Romans 12:18 says, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” Notice both realism and responsibility. “If it be possible.” Peace is not always possible because truth sometimes divides. Jesus Himself said His coming would create division where allegiance to Him collided with unbelief. Paul withstood Peter publicly in Galatians 2 when the truth of the gospel was compromised by Peter’s conduct. Jude commands believers to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” There are times when refusing conflict would mean abandoning duty. Peace at any price eventually sends the bill to truth.

Biblical separation therefore cannot automatically be condemned as unloving. Romans 16:17 tells believers to “mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.” Notice who creates the biblical division: those contradicting sound doctrine, not merely those who identify the contradiction. Second John warns against receiving one who brings false doctrine concerning Christ. The New Testament does not envision unity with every religious teacher who borrows Christian vocabulary. A wolf can wear enough wool to photograph well with sheep. The shepherd is still obligated to notice the teeth.

At the same time, separation should never become an addiction to division. Some Christians separate from everybody who cannot pronounce every secondary issue exactly as they do, then separate from the people who agreed with them for not separating quickly enough. Eventually two men remain, and one becomes suspicious of the other. That is not discernment; it is carnality wearing combat boots. Scripture distinguishes the gospel from preference, fundamental doctrine from personality, clear command from opinion, and genuine heresy from disagreement among saved people. Wisdom knows when to stand, when to teach, when to bear, when to correct, and when separation becomes necessary. A sword is valuable because it can cut. A man swinging it constantly in every direction is simply dangerous.

## **Conclusion**

The unity of the Spirit is not an ecumenical blender where truth, error, Scripture, tradition, unbelief, and sentiment are poured together until nobody can identify what anybody believes. God's unity is built around "one body," "one Spirit," "one Lord," "one faith," "one baptism," and "one God and Father." It has doctrinal content because the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of truth. Christians do not preserve unity by pretending doctrine does not matter. They preserve it by submitting together to the Lord who gave the doctrine. Truth is not the enemy of spiritual unity. Error is. Pride is. Envy is. Bitterness is. Self-will is. The flesh can divide over doctrine wrongly handled or unite around error falsely tolerated. The Spirit does neither.

Walking in the Spirit changes how believers disagree because it changes what they are trying to protect. Flesh protects reputation. The Spirit protects truth. Flesh wants vindication. The Spirit produces meekness. Flesh keeps score. The Spirit produces longsuffering. Flesh enjoys exposing another person's weakness. The Spirit seeks restoration. Flesh compromises when truth becomes inconvenient, then becomes ferocious when personal preference gets challenged. The Spirit reverses those priorities. It stands hard where God has spoken and walks softly where ego merely wants its way. Mature Christians should be difficult to move from Scripture and easy to entreat personally. Too often we become the exact opposite: immovable about our preferences and surprisingly flexible about the Book.

So keep the unity of the Spirit. Do not try to improve it by removing truth, and do not destroy it by enthroning self. Walk in lowliness. Practice meekness. Suffer long. Forbear where Scripture permits. Correct where Scripture requires. Forgive quickly. Serve faithfully. Grow in doctrine. Speak the truth in love. Mark serious error when necessary, but do not confuse every irritating Christian with an apostate. Remember that Christ is the Head, not you, and the body belongs to Him. Spiritual unity is not everybody agreeing that nothing matters. It is

believers agreeing that Christ matters more than their egos and His word matters more than their peace treaty. The Holy Ghost does not ask us to pawn the truth to purchase peace. He asks us to walk in truth so humbly, patiently, and faithfully that the peace we keep is actually worth having.

## **10 of 10 — Walking in the Spirit — Do Not Grieve the Guest: Living With the Holy Ghost Inside You**

**Key Passage: “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” (Ephesians 4:30)**

Ephesians 4:30 brings the doctrine of the Holy Ghost out of the clouds and walks it straight through the front door of the Christian’s daily life: “grieve not the holy Spirit of God.” The verse does not say merely, “Do not deny Him,” “Do not blaspheme Him,” or “Do not forget He exists.” It says do not grieve Him. That is personal language. You do not grieve electricity, atmosphere, influence, enthusiasm, or a religious force. You grieve a Person. The Holy Ghost is God dwelling inside the believer, not an occasional visitor who checks into the soul for Sunday morning services and checks out when the benediction is pronounced. He hears the conversation on the ride home. He is present when the screen lights up in the dark. He witnesses the secret resentment, the hidden appetite, the selfish decision, the dishonest sentence, and the private compromise nobody else sees. The Christian never goes anywhere without taking the indwelling Spirit with him.

The same verse that warns against grieving Him also gives one of the strongest statements of eternal security in Paul’s epistles: “whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” The Holy Ghost does not abandon the Christian every time the Christian fails. He remains. That is exactly why He can be grieved. A visitor offended by the household may leave before supper; the Spirit seals the believer unto redemption and stays inside the house while the believer behaves disgracefully in the rooms God owns. That should make sin more serious, not less. Grace does not mean the Holy Ghost looks away. Security does not mean He approves everything done by the one He sealed. The believer is secure in Christ and therefore has every reason to live like somebody purchased by Christ. The Spirit does not leave when the Christian sins, but fellowship, usefulness, joy, sensitivity, and practical spiritual power can certainly suffer.

Then 1 Thessalonians 5:19 adds another command: “Quench not the Spirit.” Grieving and quenching are related without being identical. Grieving emphasizes the personal offense of sin against the indwelling Holy Ghost; quenching pictures resistance to His operation, like

throwing water on a fire. The Spirit convicts, Scripture speaks, truth presses upon the conscience, duty becomes plain, an opportunity to serve opens, a wrong needs confessing, a witness needs speaking, a habit needs killing—and the Christian says no. Not loudly perhaps. Sometimes rebellion wears slippers. “Later.” “Not now.” “I know, but...” “That verse cannot possibly mean my situation.” That is how spiritual fire gets smothered under wet blankets of self-will. Walking in the Spirit requires more than avoiding spectacular sins. It means remaining responsive when God puts His finger on something and refusing to make stubbornness a permanent tenant.

### **1. The Holy Ghost Is Not a Visitor You Can Leave at Church**

First Corinthians 6:19 asks, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?” The New Testament believer is not periodically visited by the Spirit; he is indwelt. Romans 8:9 says, “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” In this present Church Age, possession of the Spirit belongs to salvation itself. He is not a premium feature added to Christianity for people who pray longer, shout louder, or discover some advanced spiritual experience. The saved man carries the Holy Ghost everywhere. That truth destroys the imaginary division between “sacred” and “private” life. There is no room in the Christian where God waits outside because you hung a Do Not Disturb sign on the handle. If your body is His temple, then your eyes, tongue, hands, appetite, imagination, schedule, and conduct belong inside that temple.

That makes holiness intensely personal. A believer may hide conduct from family, church members, employers, neighbors, and friends, but secrecy before men is never secrecy before God. Hebrews 4:13 says, “all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” The Holy Ghost does not need your browser history printed out. He was there when you opened it. He does not require a recording of the conversation; He heard every syllable. He does not need somebody to tell Him what motive was behind the gift, compliment, ministry decision, or angry reply. He knows. The flesh loves darkness because darkness creates the illusion of privacy. But a Christian with the Holy Ghost inside him is never spiritually alone. That can terrify hypocrisy and comfort sincerity at the same time.

Yet His indwelling is not designed to make the believer live nervously under divine surveillance as though God were hiding behind the furniture waiting to catch him. The presence of the Spirit is a blessing, power, comfort, seal, teacher, witness, and source of communion with God. Jesus promised another Comforter who would abide with His own. The tragedy of sin is therefore not merely that a rule was broken; fellowship with the One who dwells within is being resisted. A saved man sins in the very temple God inhabits. That

is like inviting a burglar into the house while the rightful Owner is sitting in the living room. Sin becomes especially ugly when you remember who is home.

## **2. Grieving the Spirit Often Happens Through Ordinary Sins**

The verses surrounding Ephesians 4:30 tell us exactly what kind of conduct grieves the Spirit. Verse 25 deals with lying. Verse 26 warns about anger. Verse 28 deals with stealing. Verse 29 condemns corrupt communication. Then verse 31 names “bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking...with all malice.” Paul does not send us searching for bizarre occult ceremonies to find what grieves the Holy Ghost. He points toward the mouth, temper, attitude, habits, and relationships of ordinary Christians. Apparently heaven is deeply concerned with what happens during arguments, not merely what happens during altar calls. A man may claim to be Spirit-filled because he had a powerful service Sunday night and then spend Monday morning lying, raging, gossiping, and nursing bitterness. Paul would have called that contradiction by its name.

Bitterness is especially destructive because it can look respectable while rotting everything underneath. Hebrews 12:15 warns of a “root of bitterness” springing up and troubling many. Roots work underground before anybody sees the fruit. A Christian gets hurt, refuses forgiveness, rehearses the offense, improves the story with each retelling, gathers witnesses, and eventually carries resentment as though it were evidence of discernment. Bitterness has a remarkable ability to remember injuries with photographic clarity while suffering sudden amnesia concerning mercy received from God. Ephesians 4:32 gives the antidote: “forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” Calvary is God’s answer to the grudge ledger. If Christ forgave your debt, the flesh has no business charging interest on somebody else’s.

Corrupt communication also grieves the Spirit because words reveal what is governing the heart. Ephesians 4:29 commands, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.” That includes filthy speech, destructive criticism, gossip, slander, cruel sarcasm, dishonest flattery, and speech designed to rot instead of edify. The tongue can sing “Holy, Holy, Holy” at ten o’clock and fillet another believer alive before noon. James said, “My brethren, these things ought not so to be” (James 3:10). A Spirit-governed tongue is not silent, timid, or incapable of rebuke. Scripture itself rebukes sharply when needed. But spiritual speech aims at truth and edification rather than feeding the flesh’s appetite to wound, dominate, humiliate, or entertain itself with somebody else’s failure.

## **3. Quenching Begins When Conviction Meets Stubbornness**

First Thessalonians 5:19 says, “Quench not the Spirit,” and the verses following are equally important: “Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

Biblical responsiveness does not mean gullibility. The Spirit is not quenched when a Christian tests a claim by Scripture; the passage actually commands proving. What quenches the Spirit is refusing what God has made clear. Truth comes, conviction follows, and the will stiffens. A Christian knows he should apologize but refuses. He knows the relationship is sinful but continues it. He knows the habit is corrupting him but protects it. He knows an opportunity to witness has come but fear wins. He knows Scripture corrected his thinking but searches for somebody who will tell him the old thinking was fine. That is water on the fire.

The longer resistance continues, the easier resistance becomes. Hebrews 3 repeatedly warns, “harden not your hearts.” A callus forms through repeated friction. The conscience can become less sensitive when repeatedly ignored. The first compromise bothers a man all night. The tenth barely interrupts supper. That does not mean the sin became smaller; it means sensitivity became duller. Spiritual decline often happens quietly. Nobody wakes up one morning announcing, “Today I intend to become carnal.” Instead, one conviction is postponed, one Bible reading skipped, one offense nursed, one excuse accepted, one duty avoided, one appetite indulged, one warning dismissed. The thermostat drops one degree at a time until eventually everybody wonders why the room feels cold.

Stubbornness is especially dangerous because it can borrow doctrinal language to justify itself. Saul in 1 Samuel 15 disobeyed God and then greeted Samuel with, “I have performed the commandment of the LORD.” Religious self-deception can become breathtaking. Saul kept what God told him to destroy and then explained that the animals were reserved for sacrifice. Disobedience brought an offering. Samuel answered, “to obey is better than sacrifice.” That principle still lands hard. A Christian cannot compensate for resisted obedience by increasing religious activity elsewhere. You cannot tithe your way out of bitterness, sing your way out of dishonesty, teach your way out of pride, or serve enough committees to make tolerated sin respectable. God prefers obedience to camouflage.

#### **4. Neglected Truth Can Starve the Spirit-Governed Walk**

The Holy Ghost inspired the Book, so neglecting Scripture while claiming to want His leading is spiritual foolishness. Ephesians 6:17 calls Scripture “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Colossians 3:16 says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” Spirit-filled living and Bible-filled thinking belong together because the Author and His Book do not compete. A Christian who ignores Scripture while asking the Spirit to guide him is like a man refusing to read a letter while praying the author will somehow tell him what it says. God already spoke. Spiritual sensitivity grows as the mind is renewed by truth and the conscience learns the sound of Scripture.

Neglect does not always look rebellious. Sometimes it merely looks busy. Work expands, entertainment fills the cracks, responsibilities multiply, devices hum, notifications breed overnight, and the Bible gradually becomes furniture. Nothing dramatic happened. Nobody burned it. Nobody denied inspiration. It simply stopped being opened. That is one of the flesh's cleverest victories because open hostility would alarm a Christian, while slow neglect feels almost respectable. Yet Psalm 119:11 says, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." A Bible hidden in the heart requires a Bible opened before the eyes. Spiritual starvation does not become healthy because the refrigerator is full.

Truth neglected also leaves the believer vulnerable to counterfeit spirituality. When Scripture is unfamiliar, feelings gain authority. Impressions start sounding like revelation. Popular teachers become substitutes for personal study. Emotional reactions become doctrine. The Christian who does not know the Book must constantly borrow somebody else's compass. Acts 17 praises the Bereans because they "searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." Daily searching produces spiritual backbone. The Spirit does not lead Christians away from examination; He gave them truth worth examining. A believer full of the Book is harder to manipulate because he has heard the Shepherd's voice in written form often enough to recognize when a religious salesman is using the wrong accent.

## **5. Immediate Confession Keeps Fellowship From Growing Cold**

First John 1:9 gives the believer a plain remedy when sin enters the walk: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Confession is not paying for sin again. Christ's blood settled the believer's judicial standing. Confession restores practical fellowship by bringing the Christian back into agreement with God about what happened. The word "if" reminds us the believer can refuse. Pride can defend, minimize, blame, rename, or postpone. The Spirit points at the sin; the flesh hires an attorney. Confession dismisses the attorney. "I was wrong" is often far more spiritual than a twenty-minute explanation of why circumstances made wrongdoing understandable.

Speed matters. Ephesians 4:26 says, "let not the sun go down upon your wrath." The principle is clear: do not give sin time to unpack. When God exposes something, deal with it. The longer sin remains defended, the more furniture it moves into the room. An angry thought becomes a grievance; a grievance becomes bitterness; bitterness becomes a narrative; the narrative becomes identity. A lustful glance becomes imagination; imagination becomes appetite; appetite starts planning. Immediate confession interrupts

construction before the building is finished. You do not need to let every sin become a historical landmark before tearing it down.

Confession should also lead to correction where possible. Zacchaeus showed fruit when he addressed wrongs involving others. A liar should start telling truth. A gossip should stop spreading poison and, where appropriate, correct what was said. A thief should restore. An angry person should seek reconciliation. Repentance that never touches conduct easily becomes religious vocabulary. The Holy Ghost does not convict merely so a Christian can feel bad more accurately. Conviction points toward cleansing and change. The Spirit-filled life is not sinless perfection, but it is increasing responsiveness. A mature Christian may still stumble, but he should not need six months and a committee meeting before admitting he fell.

## **6. Walking in the Spirit Produces Courage, Gratitude, Charity, and Service**

The positive side of not grieving the Spirit is not merely avoiding wrong. The Spirit fills the life with active obedience. Acts repeatedly connects the filling of the Holy Ghost with bold witness. In Acts 4:31 believers were “filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.” Fear shrinks when Christ becomes larger. Courage does not mean personality, volume, recklessness, or rudeness. It means obeying truth when obedience costs something. A quiet believer speaking the gospel to one person despite trembling hands may display more spiritual courage than a loud man preaching to an audience that already agrees with him.

Gratitude also marks the Spirit-governed life. Ephesians 5:18 says, “be filled with the Spirit,” and verse 20 immediately speaks of “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Complaining is easy because the flesh keeps an inventory of what it lacks. Gratitude remembers what grace supplied. The saved man possesses eternal life, forgiveness, a perfect standing in Christ, the indwelling Spirit, Scripture, access to God, resurrection hope, and a promised future. Yet the flesh can ignore all of that because the restaurant forgot the extra sauce. Thanksgiving restores proportion. A thankful believer becomes harder for circumstances to govern because gratitude keeps reminding him that God’s goodness is larger than one inconvenience.

Charity and service also reveal spiritual health because the Holy Ghost turns attention away from self. Galatians 5:13 says, “by love serve one another.” The flesh asks who noticed, who thanked, who applauded, and whether the task deserves its talents. The Spirit teaches a believer to wash feet without commissioning a plaque. Service done for Christ can remain valuable when nobody sees it. A meal taken to a hurting family, a prayer whispered for another believer, a child patiently taught Scripture, a bill anonymously

helped with, a chair quietly stacked after everyone leaves—heaven does not require a spotlight to record service. The Spirit-filled life becomes less interested in displaying spirituality and more interested in doing what love requires.

## **7. The Spirit's Work Is to Make Christ Greater and Self Smaller**

John 16:14 states the direction of the Spirit's ministry: "He shall glorify me." The Holy Ghost does not build a personality cult around the believer. He magnifies Jesus Christ. That gives us one of the clearest tests of supposed spirituality: where does the attention finally land? On Christ, His word, His cross, His truth, His glory, and His authority—or on somebody's experiences, gifts, revelations, personality, and reputation? The flesh can talk about the Holy Ghost while secretly putting itself at center stage. It has no objection to religious language as long as self receives the applause at the end.

John the Baptist said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). Though spoken in his own historical ministry, the principle captures something essential about genuine Christian service. Spiritual maturity makes Christ larger in the believer's estimation and self smaller in practical importance. That does not mean self-hatred, false humility, or refusing to use God-given abilities. It means abilities become instruments rather than idols. The preacher wants Christ remembered more than the sermon illustration. The teacher wants Scripture understood more than intelligence admired. The servant wants the work accomplished more than the name printed. The giver wants the need met more than the gift announced. The flesh collects mirrors. The Spirit keeps pointing toward a throne.

This is also why walking in the Spirit increasingly produces the mind of Christ. Philippians 2 speaks of Christ humbling Himself, taking the form of a servant, and becoming obedient unto death. The direction is downward in humility and upward in obedience. The flesh wants reputation; Christ "made himself of no reputation." The flesh wants to be served; Christ served. The flesh wants to preserve itself; Christ gave Himself. The Spirit forms that pattern in believers over time. A Spirit-governed Christian becomes easier to entreat, quicker to forgive, less hungry for recognition, more willing to obey, more interested in truth, and increasingly content to let Christ receive the glory. The Holy Ghost is not decorating the old man. He is stripping away the exhibition of self so the life of Christ becomes easier to see.

## **Conclusion**

The series ends where walking in the Spirit becomes impossible to keep theoretical. The Holy Ghost lives inside the believer. He is present in the church service and the kitchen, the prayer closet and the workplace, the public ministry and the private screen, the gracious conversation and the heated argument. He can be grieved by sin and quenched by

resistance, yet the believer is sealed “unto the day of redemption.” That combination should produce security without carelessness, intimacy without presumption, and holiness without fear of abandonment. The Christian belongs to Christ, and the Holy Ghost has taken up residence inside what Christ purchased. Every room matters because the Owner is home.

So do not grieve Him with bitterness, wrath, anger, lying, corrupt speech, hidden lust, tolerated pride, stubborn rebellion, neglected truth, or defended sin. Do not quench Him by resisting conviction, postponing obedience, despising truth, refusing service, silencing witness, or protecting what Scripture has exposed. When He convicts, respond. When Scripture corrects, yield. When you sin, confess quickly. When God opens a door to serve, walk through it. When fear speaks, obey truth anyway. When gratitude is difficult, remember grace. When another believer needs charity, kill self-interest long enough to help. Walking in the Spirit is not one giant mystical event. It is ten thousand ordinary obediences performed under the eye of God.

And that is the final lesson of the entire series. The Spirit-filled life is not a man displaying the Holy Ghost. It is the Holy Ghost steadily stripping away the display of the man. It is flesh losing territory, Christ gaining practical control, Scripture governing the mind, prayer bowing to God’s will, fruit replacing works of the flesh, truth producing unity, holiness replacing indulgence, and obedience becoming the normal direction of the walk. The world may not applaud that because the world prefers spectacle. Religious flesh may not enjoy it because flesh prefers attention. But heaven is not confused. The Holy Ghost did not enter the believer to make him impressive. He entered to glorify Christ. Do not grieve the One who lives within you. Walk with Him until the day the seal is opened in glory and faith finally gives way to sight.

### **Conclusion — Walking in the Spirit: Not Charismatic Theater, but Biblical Obedience**

Walking in the Spirit is not complicated because God made it obscure; it becomes complicated when religion piles enough human machinery on top of the Bible that nobody can see the verse anymore. Paul said, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). That command has survived two thousand years of church councils, denominations, movements, personalities, fads, counterfeit revelations, emotional spectacles, theological systems, and religious salesmanship, and it still means exactly what it said when the Holy Ghost inspired it. Walk. Put one obedient foot in front of another. Let the Spirit of God govern the mind, the mouth, the appetite, the temper, the

choices, the relationships, the service, and the private life. The Holy Ghost did not move into the believer to make Christianity strange. He moved in to make the believer holy. The great evidence of His presence is not that somebody can produce an astonishing moment in public. It is that God can produce an obedient life in private.

That distinction has run through this entire series because the flesh loves a spectacle almost as much as it loves sin. Give the flesh a nightclub and it will dance. Give it a church platform and, if nobody is careful, it will dance there too and call itself spiritual. The flesh does not object to religion as long as religion allows self to remain on the throne. It can shout about the Holy Ghost, sing about surrender, talk about revival, testify about power, and still refuse to forgive one person, control one appetite, confess one sin, or shut its mouth when pride wants the last word. That is why the Bible keeps bringing spirituality down from the rafters and placing it directly in ordinary conduct. Galatians does not ask how loudly you shouted. It asks whether the works of the flesh or the fruit of the Spirit are showing up. Ephesians does not ask whether you felt electricity in a meeting. It asks how you speak, how you forgive, how you love, how you submit, and whether you grieve the Spirit who sealed you.

The first great lesson is that the Christian must never underestimate the flesh. Salvation did not improve it. Romans 7:18 still says, “in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.” The old nature can be restrained, denied, starved, mortified, and refused, but it cannot be trusted. Give it five minutes unsupervised and it will begin writing legislation. Give it a little pride and it will build a throne. Give it a little lust and it will dig a tunnel under every conviction you ever had. Give it bitterness and it will preserve an offense longer than some museums preserve artifacts. The flesh is not merely interested in obvious wickedness either. It can become religious. It can be proud of humility, boast about separation, envy another man’s ministry, resent somebody else’s blessing, and use doctrine as a club to feed ego. The Christian who thinks he has outgrown the flesh is standing exactly where the flesh wanted him—confident, careless, and looking the wrong direction.

That is why the battlefield includes the mind. Romans 8:5 says that those who are after the Spirit mind “the things of the Spirit.” A man cannot pour the world into his head all week and then wonder why carnality keeps coming out of his mouth. Thoughts are seeds. Repeated thoughts become appetites, appetites become choices, choices become habits, and habits begin writing the story of a life. Philippians 4:8 tells the believer what deserves room in the mind because God knows the mind never remains empty. If truth does not furnish it, the world will. If Scripture does not shape it, entertainment, fear, envy, gossip, lust, outrage, and vanity will be delighted to handle the decorating. The Christian does not control every thought that knocks on the door, but he does control whether it gets a key, a

bedroom, and permission to invite relatives. Spiritual warfare sometimes looks less like shouting at devils and more like turning something off, opening a Bible, and refusing to let one filthy thought sit down.

Then comes surrender. Ephesians 5:18 says, “be filled with the Spirit,” and that command was never about receiving the Holy Ghost in installments. The saved believer is already indwelt and sealed. Filling concerns control. Something is going to govern the practical life. Pride will volunteer. Fear will volunteer. Appetite will volunteer. Ambition will volunteer. Anger usually arrives without being asked. Self-will keeps its résumé updated. Romans 6:13 says, “yield yourselves unto God.” There is the hinge. The Spirit-filled life begins when the believer quits treating God like a consultant and starts treating Him like Lord. You cannot ask the Holy Ghost to control the house while reserving three locked rooms for the flesh. Surrender is not a dramatic altar experience that expires in the parking lot. It is the daily transfer of practical authority to the God who already owns the property.

That surrender necessarily includes mortification. Romans 8:13 says, “if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” God did not command the believer to understand sin sympathetically until sin feels accepted. He said mortify it. Colossians 3:5 says the same thing. The flesh hates that language because the flesh wants negotiations. It wants probation. It wants reduced charges. It wants somebody to rename covetousness, reclassify lust, excuse anger, soften pride, and give bitterness emotional support. God says kill the deed. That does not mean abusing the body, practicing asceticism, or earning salvation through self-punishment. The believer is already accepted in Christ. Mortification is what a saved man does because the thing Christ saved him from has no business ruling him. Grace is not permission to let the old man roam through the house in slippers. Grace gives the Christian every reason to keep putting that rascal back where Romans 6 says he belongs.

But Christianity is not merely killing weeds; the Holy Ghost grows fruit. Galatians 5:22–23 gives the evidence: “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance.” There is no stage requirement in that list. Love gets tested by difficult people. Joy gets tested when circumstances collapse. Peace gets tested when trouble enters the room. Longsuffering gets tested by somebody who keeps irritating you long after you thought the lesson should have ended. Gentleness gets tested when you have enough power to be harsh. Goodness gets tested when nobody is watching. Faith gets tested when sight has nothing encouraging to report. Meekness gets tested when pride wants vindication. Temperance gets tested when appetite says, “Just one more.” You can counterfeit excitement for an hour. It is harder to counterfeit character for twenty years. Plastic fruit photographs nicely. Nobody survives by eating it.

Being led by the Spirit also had to be rescued from the fog because not every thought in a Christian's head was sent special delivery from heaven. Romans 8:14 says the sons of God are led by the Spirit, but the context speaks of mortifying the deeds of the body, not chasing private revelations through the living room. The Holy Ghost who inspired the Bible does not whisper contradictions to it. He does not command truth publicly and authorize lying privately. He does not forbid fornication in writing and approve somebody's affair because the relationship "feels different." He does not tell a man to abandon clear responsibility and then sign the excuse with "God told me." Strong feelings prove that feelings are strong. They do not prove God spoke. The safest believer is not the one with the most spectacular claim of private guidance. It is the one who knows enough Scripture to recognize when his own flesh is trying to forge God's signature.

The same principle applies to prayer. "Praying in the Holy Ghost" is not a secret frequency, a mystical state, or an excuse to make understanding irrelevant. Ephesians 6 places prayer beside the armour of God and "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Romans 8:26 says the Spirit helps "our infirmities" because "we know not what we should pray for as we ought." That is not an invitation to invent spiritual techniques; it is a promise of divine assistance. We pray to the Father through Jesus Christ, assisted by the indwelling Spirit, with Scripture shaping the mind and submission shaping the request. Biblical prayer includes confession, thanksgiving, intercession, perseverance, worship, supplication, and finally the words the flesh dislikes most: "not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). Prayer does not put God under our authority. It teaches us again that we remain under His.

Walking in the Spirit also changes how believers treat one another. Ephesians 4 says, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," but that unity is built around "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." God never asked Christians to put truth into an ecumenical blender and press puree. Biblical unity is not everybody smiling because nobody believes anything strongly enough to disagree. Neither is spirituality proven by remaining in permanent combat with every Christian who misplaces a comma. The Spirit produces lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, and love while the same chapter commands doctrinal maturity. That combination is desperately needed. Stand hard where Scripture stands and walk softly where ego merely wants its way. Some Christians are strangely flexible about doctrine and immovable about personal preferences. The Spirit of God produces the opposite.

And then the whole series reaches its most personal point: "grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30). The Holy Ghost is not a guest who visits during worship and leaves before the argument in the car. He lives inside the believer. He is present when the screen glows in the dark, when the angry

sentence forms, when bitterness begins rehearsing the offense again, when pride refuses to apologize, when conviction says stop and self-will says later. Yet the believer is sealed unto redemption. That is security without carelessness. The Spirit does not disappear every time the Christian stumbles, which makes tolerated sin more serious, not less. You sin in the presence of the One who remains. You grieve the One who sealed you. You quench the One who continues dealing with you. Grace did not make sin insignificant. Grace put God inside the house.

So what does walking in the Spirit finally look like when all ten studies are brought together? It looks like a Christian who increasingly obeys Scripture before feelings finish arguing. It looks like a man who controls his tongue because the Holy Ghost controls the man. It looks like a woman who refuses bitterness because Calvary settled a greater debt. It looks like a believer who knows when to flee temptation, when to stand for truth, when to apologize, when to forgive, when to speak, when to keep silent, when to serve unseen, and when to say no to the flesh. It looks like Scripture becoming more authoritative, Christ becoming more precious, sin becoming more hateful, prayer becoming more honest, gratitude becoming more natural, and self becoming less impressive. The Holy Ghost does not make a believer obsessed with how spiritual he is. He makes the believer increasingly occupied with Jesus Christ.

There is no finish line for this walk before glorification. Philippians 3:21 says the Lord Jesus Christ will one day “change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” Until then, the old nature remains close enough to cause trouble. The Christian will never become so mature that he can quit watching, praying, yielding, resisting, mortifying, feeding on Scripture, and depending upon God. Yesterday’s victory does not vaccinate you against tomorrow’s temptation. A snake does not become safe because you stepped over it successfully last Tuesday. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12). Spiritual maturity is not reaching a point where dependence becomes unnecessary. It is finally becoming wise enough to know dependence was necessary all along.

That should also keep the believer from despair when the battle is difficult. The presence of conflict does not mean the Holy Ghost left. Galatians 5:17 told you beforehand that flesh and Spirit are contrary. A battle means there are two sides. When you fall, confess it. When the flesh returns, resist it again. When bitterness crawls back, forgive again. When pride sits up in the coffin, knock it down again. When fear starts preaching, answer it with truth. When appetite demands government, remind it who owns the house. Christian victory is not the absence of battle; it is refusing to hand the enemy permanent authority because he

won one skirmish. Christ has already secured the believer's eternal standing. Get up and walk.

The final measure of this series is therefore not how much information was learned about the Holy Ghost, but whether the believer becomes more yielded to the Holy Ghost. Doctrine is necessary because wrong doctrine produces wrong practice, but correct doctrine is not a trophy to display behind glass. Truth is meant to govern. The Christian who can explain Spirit baptism, indwelling, sealing, filling, fruit, mortification, guidance, prayer, unity, grieving, and quenching but still refuses clear obedience has merely learned the vocabulary of a war he is not fighting. James said, "be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22). The Bible was not given so Christians could win theological trivia contests while the flesh owns the deed to the practical life.

That is the closing truth: the Spirit-filled life is not a Christian displaying the Holy Ghost. It is the Holy Ghost steadily stripping away the display of the Christian. "He shall glorify me," Jesus said of the Spirit (John 16:14). Christ increases in the life as self loses its throne. Pride shrinks. Charity grows. Lust is denied. Truth is loved. Scripture is obeyed. Prayer becomes submissive. Service becomes less interested in applause. Spiritual fruit appears where flesh once grew weeds. The Christian becomes less impressed with his own experiences and more impressed with Jesus Christ. That is not religious theater. It will not always draw a crowd. It may happen in a kitchen, a car, an office, a hospital room, a prayer closet, or in the silent second when temptation says yes and the believer answers no because God said no.

So walk. Do not merely talk about the Spirit, sing about the Spirit, argue about the Spirit, study the Spirit, or claim experiences with the Spirit. Walk in the Spirit. Take the next obedient step, and then take another. Yield the mind. Yield the tongue. Yield the body. Yield the appetite. Yield the temper. Yield the plans. Yield the private room where nobody else has a key. Let the Book judge the thought. Let the Spirit mortify the deed. Let grace teach you to deny ungodliness. Let fruit replace performance. Let Christ receive the glory. You do not need charismatic theater to prove that God is working. You need biblical obedience. The Spirit of God is not looking for a stage. He already has a temple. The question that remains is whether the man living in that temple will get out of the way and let God rule the house.

*"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."*  
Galatians 5:16

# WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

A TEN-PART SERIES ON LIVING BY THE HOLY GHOST

NOT CHARISMATIC THEATER, BUT BIBLICAL OBEDIENCE

*Led by the Word  
Empowered by the Spirit  
Living for the Glory of Christ*

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| <p><b>1 THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY GHOST</b><br/>Know Who Lives Within You</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Holy Ghost is God, not a force or feeling.</li> <li>• He indwells every saved believer (Rom. 8:9).</li> <li>• He teaches, leads, convicts, comforts, seals.</li> <li>• He glorifies Christ, not self (John 16:14).</li> <li>• Distinguish indwelling from filling.</li> </ul> <p>John 14:16-17 • John 16:13-14<br/>Romans 8:9 • 1 Corinthians 6:19<br/>Ephesians 1:13</p>                                                                                                                 | <p><b>2 A NEW NATURE, A NEW WALK</b><br/>What Walking in the Spirit Means</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking is daily, practical obedience.</li> <li>• Walk by the Spirit, not by the flesh.</li> <li>• The new nature desires God's will.</li> <li>• The Spirit enables what the flesh cannot.</li> <li>• The Christian life is progressive.</li> </ul> <p>Galatians 5:16 • Romans 8:1-6<br/>2 Corinthians 5:17 • Philippians 2:12-13<br/>Colossians 3:1-3</p>                                                                                                              | <p><b>3 THE FLESH STILL FIGHTS BACK</b><br/>Understanding the Ongoing Conflict</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The flesh and Spirit are contrary (Gal. 5:17).</li> <li>• The old nature remains until glorification.</li> <li>• Flesh produces sin, death, and misery.</li> <li>• The believer must reckon the old man dead.</li> <li>• Do not make peace with the flesh.</li> </ul> <p>Galatians 5:17 • Romans 6:6, 11<br/>Romans 7:14-25 • Colossians 3:5</p>  | <p><b>4 RENEWING THE MIND</b><br/>Feed on Truth, Not on Vanity</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mind the things of the Spirit (Rom. 8:5).</li> <li>• Let the Word of Christ dwell richly in you.</li> <li>• Guard what you watch, read, and hear.</li> <li>• Thoughts lead to desires, then to actions.</li> <li>• Replace worldly thinking with Scripture.</li> </ul> <p>Romans 8:17 • Philippians 4:8<br/>Colossians 3:16 • 2 Corinthians 10:5</p>                                               | <p><b>5 KILL WHAT KEEPS CRAWLING BACK</b><br/>Mortifying the Deeds of the Body</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>LUST<br/>PRIDE<br/>ANGER<br/>COVETOUSNESS<br/>LAZINESS<br/>SIN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the Spirit mortify the deeds (Rom. 8:13).</li> <li>• Put sin to death, do not negotiate with it.</li> <li>• Resist sinful habits and appetites.</li> <li>• Grace gives power to say no.</li> <li>• The flesh is persistent but defeated.</li> </ul> <p>Romans 8:13 • Colossians 3:5<br/>Galatians 5:24 • Romans 6:12</p> |
| <p><b>6 FRUIT CANNOT BE FAKED</b><br/>The Evidence of a Spirit-Governed Life</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>LOVE<br/>JOY<br/>PEACE<br/>LONGSUFFERING<br/>GENTLENESS<br/>GOODNESS<br/>FAITH<br/>MEEKNESS<br/>TEMPERANCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fruit of the Spirit reveals real life.</li> <li>• Compare fruit with the works of the flesh.</li> <li>• Character is the evidence, not spectacle.</li> <li>• Fruit shows up under pressure.</li> <li>• You cannot counterfeit it indefinitely.</li> </ul> <p>Galatians 5:22-23 • Galatians 5:19-21<br/>Matthew 7:16 • 2 Peter 1:5-8</p> | <p><b>7 LED BY THE SPIRIT</b><br/>Not by Every Voice in Your Head</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SCRIPTURE<br/>WISDOM<br/>PROVIDENCE<br/>RIGHT JUDGMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those led by the Spirit are sons of God (Rom. 8:14).</li> <li>• The Spirit will never lead contrary to Scripture.</li> <li>• Guidance involves prayer, providence, and wisdom.</li> <li>• Test every impression by the Word.</li> <li>• Do not baptize personal desire as God's leading.</li> </ul> <p>Romans 8:14 • Proverbs 3:5-6<br/>Isaiah 8:20 • 1 Thessalonians 5:21</p> | <p><b>8 PRAYING IN THE HOLY GHOST</b><br/>Without Turning Prayer Into Mysticism</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pray with all prayer in the Spirit (Eph. 6:18).</li> <li>• The Spirit helps our infirmities (Rom. 8:26).</li> <li>• Pray according to truth and God's will.</li> <li>• Include confession, thanksgiving, intercession.</li> <li>• No mystical method is required.</li> </ul> <p>Ephesians 6:18 • Jude 20<br/>Romans 8:26-27 • 1 John 5:14-15</p> | <p><b>9 ONE SPIRIT, ONE BODY</b><br/>Spiritual Unity Without Doctrinal Surrender</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3).</li> <li>• Unity is built on truth: one Lord, one faith, one baptism.</li> <li>• Reject compromise and constant combat.</li> <li>• Walk in humility, patience, and charity.</li> <li>• Stand for sound doctrine while loving brethren.</li> </ul> <p>Ephesians 4:1-6, 11-16<br/>Philippians 2:1-4 • 1 Corinthians 1:10</p> | <p><b>10 DO NOT GRIEVE THE GUEST</b><br/>Living With the Holy Ghost Inside You</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grieve not the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30).</li> <li>• Quench not the Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19).</li> <li>• Avoid bitterness, wrath, corrupt speech, and sin.</li> <li>• Be responsive, yielded, grateful, and holy.</li> <li>• The Spirit-filled life is Christ gaining ground.</li> </ul> <p>Ephesians 4:30 • 1 Thessalonians 5:19<br/>Galatians 5:25 • 2 Corinthians 3:18</p>                                                                 |

**THE TWO PATHS**

**THE WORKS OF THE FLESH**

Adultery • Fornication • Uncleaness  
Lasciviousness • Idolatry • Witchcraft  
Hatred • Variance • Emulations • Wrath  
Strife • Seditions • Heresies • Envyings  
Murders • Drunkenness • Revellings  
and such like (Galatians 5:19-21)

**THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT**

Love • Joy • Peace • Longsuffering  
Gentleness • Goodness • Faith  
Meekness • Temperance  
(Galatians 5:22-23)

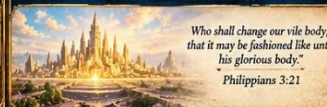
**PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

- Read and obey the King James Bible daily.
- Keep a short account with God in prayer.
- Confess sin immediately and make it right.
- Mortify the flesh and flee temptation.
- Look for opportunities to serve and witness.
- Cultivate love, forgiveness, and gratitude.
- Stay in sound doctrine and faithful fellowship.
- Let the Holy Ghost glorify Christ in your life.

**THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE**

*"It is not a man displaying the Holy Ghost.  
It is the Holy Ghost steadily stripping away the display of the man."*

**OUR FINAL DESTINATION**



*Who shall change our vile body,  
that it may be fashioned like unto  
his glorious body."*  
Philippians 3:21

 VERSEQUEST MINISTRIES

*"Let us also walk in the Spirit."* Galatians 5:25

For the Glory of Jesus Christ