

## How You can Walk in the Spirit

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<http://www.campuscrusade.com/Articles/walkarticle.htm>

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### Experiencing the Adventure



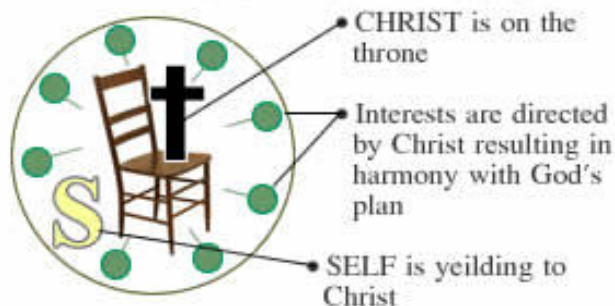
A medical doctor approached me with great excitement at the conclusion of our training conference. He was overflowing with joy and excitement.

"Since I have learned how to be filled with the Holy Spirit and walk in His power, the Christian life has become a great adventure for me!" he exclaimed. "Now, I want to experience this same adventure with Christ."

Would you like to know how to enjoy what this man and millions of other Christians have experienced? You too can know the adventure

of a full, abundant, purposeful and fruitful life in Christ!

### The Christ-Directed Life



If you have been living in spiritual defeat - powerless and fruitless, wondering if there is any validity to the Christian life - there is hope for you! What greater promise could Christ offer to the Christian than the assurance that he can walk daily in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and experience an abundant and fruitful life of purpose and adventure? Here is His promise:

*I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.*

*And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.*

*You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*

Certain basic spiritual truths, when understood and experienced by faith, bring revolutionary spiritual benefits. These proven principles can help you to be more consistent in your walk with God and be more effective in your witness for our dear Savior.

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The Christian life, properly understood, is neither complex nor difficult. As a matter of fact, the Christian life is very simple. It is so simple that we stumble over the very simplicity of it, and yet it is so difficult that no one can live it! This paradox occurs because the Christian life is a supernatural life. The only one who can help us live this abundant life is the Lord Jesus Christ who empowers us with His Holy Spirit.

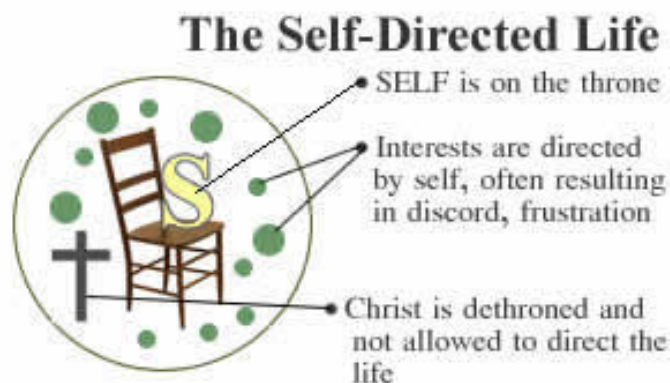
### **Be Sure You are Filled with the Spirit**

One of the most important truths of Scripture, the understanding and application of which has enriched my life as has no other truth, is a concept which I like to call "*Spiritual Breathing*." This concept has been shared with millions - with revolutionary results - through our literature and various training conferences and seminars.

As you walk in the Spirit by faith, practicing *Spiritual Breathing*, you need never again live in spiritual defeat. *Spiritual Breathing*, like physical breathing, is a process of exhaling the impure and inhaling the pure, an exercise in faith that enables you to experience God's love and forgiveness and walk in the Spirit as a way of life.

The moment you invited Christ into your life as Savior and Lord, you experienced a spiritual birth. You became a child of God and you were filled with the Holy Spirit. God forgave your sins - past, present and future - making you righteous, holy and acceptable in His sight because of Christ's sacrifice for you on the cross. You were given the power to live a holy life and to be a fruitful witness for God.

But the average Christian does not understand this concept of *Spiritual Breathing* as an exercise of faith and, as a result, lives on a spiritual roller coaster. He goes from one emotional experience to another living most of his life as a worldly Christian, controlling his own life - frustrated and fruitless.



If this is your experience, *Spiritual Breathing* will enable you to get off this emotional roller coaster and enjoy the Christian life that the Lord Jesus promised to you when He said, "I came that they might have life and might have it abundantly." As an exercise in faith, *Spiritual Breathing* will make it possible for you to continue to experience God's love, forgiveness, and the power and control of the Holy Spirit as a way of life.

If you sin by committing a deliberate act of disobedience, breathe spiritually. *Exhale by confession.* God's Word promises in John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In the Greek, the original language of the New Testament, the word "confess" (homologeō) means to "agree with" or to "say along with." Such agreement involves at least three considerations.

First, you acknowledge that your sin or sins - which should be named to God specifically - are wrong and are therefore grievous to Him.

Second, you acknowledge that God has already forgiven you through Christ's death on the cross for your sins.

Third, you repent, which means that you change your attitude toward your sin. The power of the Holy Spirit will enable you to change both your attitude and conduct. Instead of doing what your old sinful nature - your flesh - wants to do, you can do what God wants you to do.



Now *inhale* by appropriating the fullness of God's Spirit by faith. Trust him to control and empower you according to his command to "be filled with the Spirit" which actually means to be constantly and continually controlled and empowered with the Holy Spirit.

According to His *promise*, God hears you and grants your request because you pray according to His will. I encourage you to continue to claim his love, forgiveness and power by faith and continue to have fellowship with Him moment by moment.

You can get off your spiritual roller coaster, cease to be a worldly or carnal Christian, and become a Spirit-filled believer by practicing *Spiritual Breathing*. If you are breathing and inhaling by appropriating the fullness of the Holy Spirit by faith - you are a Spirit-filled Christian.

You become a worldly Christian again when you develop (over time) an attitude of unbelief - when you set your heart against believing the promises of 1 John 1:9 and 1 Corinthians 10:13:

*No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

You do not become carnal simply by committing one sin or a dozen or a hundred sins provided that you sincerely continue to breathe spiritually. You will become worldly only when you develop an attitude of unbelief and refuse to breathe spiritually.

You can know right now that you are filled with the Holy Spirit. Through the concept of *Spiritual Breathing*, you can go through life assured of his fullness. Simply keep short accounts with God. Do not let sins accumulate.

If you try to live the Christian life by your own fleshly effort, it becomes complex, difficult and even impossible to live. But when you invite the Lord Jesus to direct your life; when you know the reality of having been crucified with Christ and raised with Him by faith as a way of life;

when you walk in the light as God is in the light in the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus simply lives his abundant life within you in all of His resurrection power.

I'm not suggesting that the Christian who walks in the fullness of the Spirit will have no difficulties. Problems of poor health, loss of loved ones, financial needs and other such experiences are common to all people. However, many of our misfortunes are self-imposed because of our own worldly, selfish actions. The spiritual person is spared most of these self-imposed hardships. But when the problems do come, the spiritual person can face them with a calm, confident attitude because he is aware of God's resources which are available to him to deal with adversity.

This is not simply a matter of positive thinking. We are instructed to cast our cares upon the Lord Jesus because He cares for us. The spiritual person knows the trustworthiness of God from experience. The Lord becomes the problem-solver, and the trials and burdens of this world are no longer too great for us when He is carrying the load.

This was at the heart of the Apostle Paul's moment-by-moment experience:

*I have been crucified with Christ: and I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the real life I now have within this body is a result of my trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

There is a throne, a control center - the intersection of one's intellect, will and emotion - in every life. And either self of Christ is on that throne. Let me illustrate.

I like to plan as far in advance as possible, especially for key events. But occasionally I get so busy with the many details of our worldwide ministry that an important item slips through.

With a key conference just a couple of weeks away, I had just realized the need for a set of printed materials that would be a tremendous benefit to the conferees.

As I shared the urgency with the department director responsible for this need, he responded, "Bill, we're full up already. Two weeks just isn't enough time."

I became impatient. Couldn't my associate see that we are in a war for men's souls, that we must seize opportunities when they arise and not limit our efforts to 8-to-5 workdays? I made my point clear to him.

"But if we had more notice..." he protested, "There just is no way we can squeeze in such a huge job with so little time. There's the writing, then the design and typesetting and artwork, then the printing."

It seemed obvious that he did not share my burden for the upcoming event. I pressed my point. "Look, this is an important international conference," I said firmly, my voice rising, "and this is no time for 'business as usual.' Please find a way to finish this project in time for the conference, even if you have to work around the clock."

I could tell my colleague was frustrated. But I reasoned, *We need those printed materials. Whatever it takes, we need them.*

Within a few moments after our conversation, I sensed the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Yes, even in our well-intended service to the Lord, we can stumble - and in the name of godliness I had offended a dear brother in Christ. I had failed to give him and his staff the benefit of the doubt - failed to take into account the tough workload they already were facing each day.

Instead of asking him to think through the possibilities with me and helping him rearrange his priorities to accommodate the new task, I had virtually ordered him to get the project done and shown little appreciation for the many late evenings his team was already devoting to their work. I had reacted impatiently rather than in a spirit of love, understanding and teamwork.

**At this point I had a choice to make.**

On the one hand, I could let it go. After all, doesn't the head of a large organization have the right to ramrod projects through when necessary? Didn't the end (the strategic international conference) justify the means (get the job done no matter what it takes)? And didn't my associate's hesitant attitude warrant a stern talking-to about the urgency of the hour?

By all human standards, I probably could have justified letting the incident go. But deep inside I would have been restless and uncomfortable as the Holy Spirit continued to point out the sin to me, and God would not have blessed my efforts on His behalf as long as this sin remained unconfessed. On top of that, several of my dear co-workers would have continued to hurt as a result of my calloused attitude.

On the other hand, I could deal with the problem by taking scriptural action to clear the slate. The unrest in my conscience was the Holy Spirit cross-examining me as I tried to rationalize my behavior. What I had thought was forceful leadership, He was identifying as the sins of impatience and unjustifiable anger.

I knew that taking scriptural action was the only choice I could make that would please my Lord. I confessed my sin to Him and appropriated his forgiveness.

**Then came the toughest part.**

I drove down to the office complex where my associate and his team were located and asked their forgiveness. We cried and laughed and prayed together, sensing a fresh outpouring of God's love in our midst. Then we talked through our mutual needs and found a way - as teammates - to rearrange priorities and accomplish the task - on time!

That is what the Christian life is all about - just keeping Christ on the throne. You do this when you understand how to walk in the control and power of the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit came for the express purpose of glorifying Christ by enabling the believer to live a holy life and to be a fruitful witness for our dear Savior.

As I have said previously, to be sure you are filled with the Holy Spirit; you need to remember two important words: command and promise. The command is found in Ephesians 5:18,

*Be filled...with the Holy Spirit, and controlled by him.* (Living Bible)

And the promise is found in 1 John 5:14,15:

*Ask him for anything in line with his (God's) will. And ... we can be sure that he will answer us.* (Living Bible)

On the authority of God's command you know that you are praying according to His will when you ask Him to fill you - to control and empower you. Therefore, you can expect him to fill and empower you on the basis of His command and promise provided that you genuinely desire to be filled and trust him to fill you.

Remember that the Holy Spirit already dwells within you if you are a believer. You do not have to ask him to come into your life; he is already indwelling you. Your body was a temple of God from the moment you became a Christian. So you simply say to Him,

*"I surrender my life to You, and by faith I claim your fullness and power."*

Then continue to breathe spiritually, exhaling whenever the Holy Spirit reveals sin that you need to confess and inhaling as you go on walking in the fullness and control of the Spirit by faith. Some Christians breathe spiritually faster and more often than others.

Do not depend upon feelings. Tied as they are to your ever-changing circumstances, feelings are unreliable in evaluating your relationship with God. The unchanging promises of God's Word, not your feelings, are your authority. The Christian is to live by faith, trusting in the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word. A train is a good illustration of the relationship between fact, faith and feeling.



Let us call the train engine "fact" - the fact of God's promises found in His Word. The fuel car we will call "faith" - your trust in God and His Word. The caboose we will call "feelings."

As fuel flows into the engine, the train runs. It would be futile and, of course, ridiculous to attempt to pull the train by the caboose. In the same way you, as a Christian, should not depend upon feelings or emotions to live a Spirit-filled life. Rather, God wants you to simply place your faith in his trustworthiness and the promises of His Word.

Feelings are like the caboose - they are important but are designed to follow a life of faith and obedience. Jesus promised all who obey Him, "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." So, you can expect to have a valid emotional relationship with our Lord when you trust and obey Him. But you should never depend on feelings or seek after an emotional experience. The very act of looking for an emotional experience is a denial of the concept of faith, and whatever is not of faith is sin.

To summarize then, you can know that your are filled with the Holy Spirit by trusting in God - His command and promise - and you can go through life with that assurance.

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## Be Prepared for Conflict



The Bible explains that there are three forces - the world, the flesh and the devil - which constantly wage war against the believer. Let's look briefly at each of these forces.

### 1. The World

I don't know anyone who loves this world who has ever been used of God in any significant



way. There's nothing wrong with money and other material success. However, you must wear the cloak of materialism loosely. You must set your affection on Christ and His kingdom, not on the material things of this world. 1 John 2:15-17 warns:

*Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love these things you show that you do not really love God; for all these worldly things, these evil desires - the craze for sex, the ambition to buy everything that appeals to you, and the pride that comes from wealth and importance - these are not from God. They are from this evil world itself. And this world is fading away, and these evil, forbidden things will go with it, but whoever keeps doing the will of God will live forever.*

## **2. The Flesh**

God's Word teaches that the spiritual Christian should be prepared for battles with the flesh. You will have conflict in your life so long as you live. There will never be a time in this life when you are free from temptation. Galatians 5:17 says:

*We naturally love to do evil things that are just the opposite from the things that the Holy Spirit tells us to do; and the good things we want to do when the Spirit has his way with us are just the opposite of our natural desires. These two forces within us are constantly fighting each other to win control over us, and our wishes are never free from their pressures.*

All people, no matter how spiritually mature in Christ, experience temptation and have a tendency toward sin. There is a difference, however, between temptation and sin. Temptation is the initial impression to do something contrary to God's will. Such impressions come to all men and women, even as they did to our Lord, and are not sin in themselves. Temptation becomes sin when you meditate on the impression and develop a lustful desire which is often followed by the actual act of disobedience.

Yet this conflict is largely resolved when you, by an act of your will, surrender yourself to the control of the Holy Spirit and face these temptations in His power. Galatians 5:16 says:

*Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

How do you do this? For practical daily living you simply recognize your weakness whenever you are tempted and ask the Lord to take care of the problem for you. When I am tempted, I often remind the Lord that I belong to Him and need His help. I ask him to cleanse my mind and thoughts with his blood and control and empower me with the Holy Spirit so I will not yield to any temptation.

## **3. The Devil**

Satan is a real foe - let there be no mistake about it - and we need to be prepared for conflict with him - alert to his cunning and subtle ways, as well as his obvious attempts to defeat and destroy us. 1 Peter 5:8,9 says:

*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

Resist him, standing firm in the faith because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of suffering.

A young minister shared with me one day, "I am afraid of Satan."

I said, "You should be afraid of Satan, if you insist on controlling your own life. But if you are willing to let Christ control your life, you have nothing to fear because the Bible says, 'Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.'

"Satan was defeated 2,000 years ago," I explained, "when Christ in fulfillment of prophecy died on the cross for our sins. Though Satan has great power to influence man, he has only that power which God has granted to him. That is why, in the face of great persecution, the disciples could pray to God in His sovereignty and power, 'They won't stop at anything that you in your wise power will let them do'.

My minister friend happened to live in a city with one of the largest zoos in the world. I said, "What do you do with lions in your city?"

He replied, "We put them in a cage."

I said, "That's exactly what God has done to Satan. Visit the cage in the zoo and watch a lion pacing impatiently back and forth. He cannot hurt you. Even if you go up close to the cage, he still cannot hurt you if you are careful. But get in the cage, and the lion will devour you. You have nothing to fear as long as you stay out of that cage.

"Similarly, you have nothing to fear from Satan as long as you depend upon Christ and not on your own strength. Remember, Satan has no power except that which God in His wisdom allows him to have."

The apostle Paul warns us, "Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand against the strategies and tricks of Satan. For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against persons without bodies - the evil rulers of the unseen world, those mighty satanic beings and great evil princes of darkness who rule this world; and against huge numbers of wicked spirits in the spirit world."

Although Satan and the forces of darkness are dangerous foes, and you must be alert to the way Satan works, you need have no fear of him - if your life is surrendered to the Lordship of Christ, if you continue to walk in faith and obedience in the power of the Holy Spirit. Even though Satan is an expert at deceiving and inducing Christians to disobey God, you need not fear him. Remember, the Scripture says, "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." But if you continue to be a worldly Christian, you had better be ready for some real problems in your personal life, your family and your church. There is no more dangerous and vulnerable place a Christian can be than to live outside God's perfect will as a worldly or carnal Christian.

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## Know Your Resources as a Child of God



If you want to walk in the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit, you need to know your spiritual heritage. You need to know how to draw upon the inexhaustible resources of God's love, wisdom, power, forgiveness and abundant grace.



It is impossible to walk vigorously and dynamically in the Spirit without spending time, unhurried time, in fellowship with our Lord in His Word - in prayer and in personal study. You must listen attentively to Him for His directions for your daily activities and witness for Christ.

After many years of working with thousands of Christians, I am convinced that one cannot enjoy the full and abundant life, which is your heritage in Christ, apart from the proper balance between Bible study, prayer and sharing Christ with others out of the overflow of an obedient, Spirit-filled life. God calls you not only to experience this great adventure with Christ for yourself, but also to share this good news with others.

A word of caution is in order at this point. You become spiritual and experience God's power as a way of life as a result of faith and faith alone. The Bible clearly teaches that "the just shall live by faith," and "Without faith it is impossible to please God." The practice of spiritual discipline and activities is the result of faith. Bible study, prayer, witnessing and obedience are vitally important, but they should be regarded as the result - the overflow - of the life of faith, not as the means of faith, though faith grows as you see the faithfulness of God through an understanding of his Word.

Paul says,

*"I want to remind you that your strength must come from the Lord's mighty power within you." Jesus Christ, the visible expression of God in whom dwells all of the fullness of the Godhead bodily - to whom all authority in heaven and earth has been given - lives in all of us who have become His children through faith in Christ. You do not have any strength in yourself. You must rely totally upon the mighty resurrection strength of our Lord through His Holy Spirit.*

As a young man in college and later in business, I used to be very self-sufficient and proud of what I could accomplish on my own. I believed that a man could do just about anything he wanted to do on his own if he was willing to pay the price of hard work and sacrifice, and I experienced some degree of success. Then, when I became a Christian, I was introduced to a whole new philosophy of life that was diametrically opposed to my previous philosophy. A life of trusting in God's power replaced by life of trying in my own power.

Now I realize how totally incapable I am of living the Christian life - how weak I am in my own strength and yet how strong I am in Christ. As Paul said, "I can do everything through him (Christ) who gives me strength."

In John 15:4,5, the Lord stresses the importance of drawing your strength from him:

*Take care to live in me, and let me live in you. For a branch can't produce fruit when severed from the vine. Nor can you be fruitful apart from me.*

*Yes, I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in me and I in him shall produce a large crop of fruit. For apart from me, you can't do a thing.*

In your own strength you are helpless, spiritually impotent and fruitless; you are like a branch cut off from the vine if you try to live your own life, even as a Christian. But if you abide in Christ, and His Word abides in you, it is His life-giving power that is expressed through you and enables you to live and witness for Him.

Jesus explained the importance of a fruitful witness in John 15:8

*"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."*

I have never led anyone to Christ and I never shall, though I have had the privilege of praying with thousands who have received Christ as a result of my witness. The new birth is the work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, I cannot boast over much fruit or be discouraged with little fruit. The responsibility for fruit belongs to the Holy Spirit, who works in and through me, producing fruit and changing the lives of individuals. My role is to trust God and obey Him. The words of a great old hymn, **Trust and Obey**, express this well:

*When we walk with the Lord, in the light of his Word,*

*What a glory he sheds on our way.*

*When we do His good will, he abides with us still,*

*And with all who will trust and obey.*

All that God expects of you is your availability, your trust and your obedience. Success in witnessing is simply sharing Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and laying the results to God. Paul writes:

*I pray that you will begin to understand how incredibly great his power is to help those who believe him. It is that same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in heaven, far, far, above any other king or ruler or dictator or leader.*

*Yes, his honor is far more glorious than that of anyone else either in this world or in the world to come. And God has put all things under his feet and made him the supreme Head of the church - which is his body, filled with himself, the Author and Giver of everything everywhere.*

The Lord Jesus commissioned the disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel, with the promise that he would always be with them. Jesus didn't say to them, "Go into all the world, and good luck." He said, "Be sure of this - that I am with you always, even to the end of the world."



Our living Savior, the One whom you serve, is the omnipotent God! He is the One whom the Bible says:

*...is the exact likeness of the unseen God. He existed before God made anything at all, and, in fact, Christ Himself is the Creator who made everything in heaven and earth, the things we can see and the things we can't; the spirit world and its kings and*

*kingdoms, its rulers and authorities; all were made by Christ for his own use and glory...*

*For God wanted all of himself to be in his Son...In him lie hidden all the mighty untapped treasures of wisdom and knowledge...Don't let others spoil your faith and joy with their philosophies, their wrong and shallow answers built on men's thoughts and ideas, instead of on what Christ has said.*

For in Christ there is all of God in a human body; so you have everything when you have Christ, and you are filled with God through your union with Christ. He is the highest Ruler, with authority over every other power.

If you have Christ, you have everything you need, for, as Paul writes to the church in Colossae, you are complete in Him. Do you need love? Our Lord Jesus Christ is the incarnation of love. Do you need joy? He is joy. Do you need peace? Christ is peace. Do you need patience? Christ is patience. Do you need wisdom? Christ is wisdom.

Do you need material possessions so that you can better serve Christ? They are available in Him. He owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and I would remind you of His promise to supply the needs of all who trust Him. Christianity is Christ, and you are complete in Him. HE will provide all you need.

A careful study of the Book of Romans, especially the first eight chapters, can have a revolutionary impact on the life of any sincere seeker after truth. Romans 6 especially reminds us of four truths:

#### **1. We are no longer under sin's control**

Your old evil desires were nailed to the cross with him; that part of you that loves to sin was crushed and fatally wounded, so that your sin-loving body is no longer under sin's control, no longer needs to be a slave to sin; for when you are deadened to sin you are freed from its allure and its power over you.

#### **2. We are alive to God**

So look upon your old sin nature as dead and unresponsive to sin, and instead be alive to God.

#### **3. We must give ourselves completely to God**

Do not let any part of your bodies become tools of wickedness to be used for sinning; but give yourselves completely to God - every part of you - for you are back from death, and you want to be tools in the hands of God to be used for his good purposes.

#### **4. We must obey God**

Don't you realize that you can choose your own master? You can choose sin (with death) or else obedience (with acquittal). The one to whom you offer yourself - he will take you and be your master, and you will be his slave.

One day my wife Vonette and I were wading down a shallow stream in Yosemite Park with our two sons. Because the rocks were slippery, I was holding our five-year-old, Brad, by the hand to keep him from slipping. Suddenly Brad did slip on one of the rocks, and his feet went out from under him. He would have had a serious fall and could have been injured had I not held him firmly until he regained his balance. As we continued our walk, Brad looked up into my face

with a radiant expression of gratitude and said "Daddy, I'm sure glad you saved me from falling."

In the flash of a moment, it was as though God had spoken to me, and I looked up to Him and said, "Father, I am so glad that You have kept me from falling!" Oh, this Christian life is wonderful. It is exciting! It is filled with adventure for those who obey God and let Him control their lives - who walk with him moment by moment, day by day, allowing Him to "hold their hands."

This personal, intimate walk with Christ, our Savior and our friend, is Christianity - not the fleshly striving, strain, labor and self-disciplining which is usually characteristic of the average, misinformed Christian. If you desire to walk in the Spirit, be sure to know your resources as a child of God so that you can say with the apostle Paul,

*"I can do everything through him (Christ) who gives me strength."*

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## Live by Faith



Walking in the Spirit means living a life of faith. God created us with a capacity for experiencing a broad range of feelings. Thank God you have them. But you cannot depend on them to validate your walk with the Lord Jesus. Valid emotions are simply the byproduct, the result, of faith and obedience. While feelings have their place in our lives, God did not intend for them to be emphasized above our faith in His Word. To seek an emotional experience repudiates the command to walk by faith and is, in fact, an insult to God. Let emotions find their proper place in your relationship with Christ.

John 14:21 indicates that the most valid way to have an emotional experience is to be obedient to Christ. One of the greatest acts of obedience is to share Christ with others in the power of the Holy Spirit. Since He came to seek and to save the lost and has commissioned you to witness for Him, nothing could please the Savior more. If you want a valid, vital, exciting awareness of Christ in your experience, begin to share Christ with others as a way of life.

To walk in the Spirit, you must live according to God's promise, trusting in the integrity of God Himself. Faith must have an object, and the object of your faith is God, made known through His Word. God has proven himself to be worthy of your trust. There are thousands of promises for you contained in God's word, and no Christian has ever found any one of them to be untrue. When God says something, you can stake your life on it - you can know that He will not fail you.

In Romans 8:28 Paul writes,

*"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."*

Do you believe this promise of God's Word? If so, you logically acknowledge the reasonableness of the command of God in 1 Thessalonians 5:18:

*"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."*

Have you learned to say, "Thank You, Lord," when your heart is broken because of the loss of a loved one? Do you thank God when your body is wracked with pain? When you receive a letter terminating a love relationship? When you have financial reverses? When you fail an exam? When you are unemployed? Do you thank God when you are discriminated against personally, religiously, or racially?

You may say that only a fool would give thanks to God under such circumstances. No, not if you know "that in all things God works for the good of those who love him." If God has commanded you to give thanks, there is a reason for it. This is one of the most exciting lessons I have ever learned - the lesson of saying "Thank You" even when things go wrong.

Before I made this discovery I used to lose my patience when things went contrary to my wishes. Closed doors would often be forced open, if necessary. If they did not open before me, I tried to break them down; I was often tense inside and impatient with others. Then I discovered what a fool I was. Tragically we injure our brothers with our impatience, our criticism, our thoughtlessness. When Christians act this way, the entire Body of Christians suffers.

But God has given you a better plan. You can relax. You can say "Thank You" when the whole world is crumbling around you because your God is sovereign and omnipotent. He holds the world in His hands, and you can trust Him, He loves you. And He promises to fight for you.

He has commanded you to cast all of your cares upon him because He cares for you. He personally visited this world and took your sins upon Himself, and He is waiting to bless and use you. But He will not bless and use you if you are worried and unbelieving. He will not bless and use you if you complain and criticize and find fault.

Some time ago, a young woman came to our headquarters for one of our training conferences. After one of my messages, she came for counsel. Through her tears she shared how her dearest friend had been killed in an accident. They were coming home from their engagement party, and an oncoming automobile crossed the center line, forcing her off the road into a telephone pole.

The tragedy was compounded by the guilt she felt because she had been driving the car. Her heart was broken.

"What shall I do?" she pleaded.

Months had passed and she had gone to psychiatrists, psychologists, ministers and many others seeking counsel. She said, "If you can't help me, I fear for my sanity."

I asked her if she were a Christian, and after some discussion she said, "Yes."

We read Romans 8:28 and I asked her, "So you believe that all things work for good?"

She said, "Yes, I believe that."

We turned to 1 Thessalonians 5:18. She read it aloud: "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

I said to her, "Have you thanked God since the loss of your loved one?" She was shocked and could hardly believe she heard me correctly. Looking at me in disbelief, she said, "How can I thank God when I have experienced such a tragic loss?"

"You do not trust God, do you?" I asked.

"Yes, I trust God," she insisted.

"Then why not show Him that you do?" I asked, "I know it will be difficult and may seem ridiculous at first, but will you pray and tell God that you trust Him and give thanks in everything even though your heart is breaking?"

As we knelt together, she prayed through her tears, "God I don't understand why my dearest friend was killed, but I know I can trust You; and I do say, 'Thank You.'"

When she said, "Thank You," she was saying to God, "I will trust You." The Bible says that without faith you cannot please God, and the best way to demonstrate faith is to say, "Thank You." You may think that you hate God because you have lost a loved one, your inheritance, your money, your business or your health. You may ask, "Why did God do this to me?" But God says, Give thanks in all circumstances."

That young lady came to my office early the next morning literally bubbling with joy. She said,

*"Last night I slept without medication for the first time since the accident. And this morning when I awakened, my heart was filled with praise and thanksgiving to God. I just cannot understand it, but I know that it has something to do with what you taught me about saying 'Thank You' to God."*

I could share hundreds of similar stories about Christians whose lives have been transformed by learning the simple lesson of saying "Thank You" in all things.

Some years ago we had a desperate need for more than a half million dollars toward the purchase of Arrowhead Springs, the Campus Crusade for Christ International Headquarters. The future of our worldwide ministry was at stake. Because of a technicality, our financial position had taken a terrible turn for the worse, and there appeared to be no hope. The whole ministry was in danger of being destroyed and my own reputation would be shattered.

When a word came to me from a friend that the money which we had been promised was no longer available, I fell to my knees and said, "Lord, what am I to do?" I opened my Bible to look for help and assurance. And I was reminded that all things work together for good to those who love God, that without faith, it is impossible to please Him, and that the just shall live by faith. I read the command from God to give thanks in everything.

So I thanked God in spite of what had happened. I thanked Him through my tears. I thanked Him that in His wisdom and love, He knows better than I what should be done and that out of this chaos and uncertainty would come a miraculous solution to our problem.

There on my knees, while I was giving thanks in spite of the disappointment I was feeling, God began to give me the genuine assurance that a miracle was really going to happen. Within ten days God provided an incredible solution to our problem - a true miracle. He demonstrated again that, when we trust Him, He is faithful and worthy of our trust.



The greatest privilege of life is to learn to trust God, learn how to walk by faith. I am still learning and am confident that one day I shall be able to trust God for infinitely greater things than those for which I am now able to trust Him. What a great opportunity is ours to walk with the King of kings every moment of every day of our lives, from the time that we awaken in the morning until we go to bed at night.

For many years it has been my practice to begin my day the night before by reading God's Word, meditating upon the attributes and trustworthiness of our wonderful Lord before I go to sleep at night. Then throughout the night watches, when my subconscious mind takes over, I continue thinking about Christ. When I awaken in the morning, my first thoughts are of Him.

I usually awaken with a psalm of praise on my lips and with an attitude of thanksgiving:

*"Oh, Lord, I thank You that I belong to You. I thank You that You live within me, and I thank You that You have forgiven my sins. I thank You that I am your child.*

*"Now, as I begin this day, and as I continue throughout the day, I invite You to walk around in my body, love with my heart, speak with my lips and think with my mind. I thank You that You promised to do greater things through me than You did when You were hereon the earth. By faith, I acknowledge your greatness, your power, your authority in my life, and I invite you to do anything You wish in and through me today."*

Although the words of my daily prayer may differ, my commitment remains the same.

I try to begin each day on my knees as a formal act of acknowledging his lordship. I seek to begin the day walking in the fullness of His power. What an adventure awaits those who trust the Lord!

**In summary**, may I remind you that if you desire to walk moment by moment, day by day, in the fullness and power of God's Spirit, you must:

1. Be sure that you are filled with the Spirit, **by faith** - on the basis of God's *command* to be filled and by claiming His promise that, if you ask according to His will, He will hear and answer.
2. Be prepared for **spiritual conflict** with the world, the flesh and the devil.
3. Know your **resources** as a child of God. Your strength must come from the Lord. You must abide in Him.
4. Live by faith, drawing daily upon the **strength of our Lord**, upon his wisdom, upon His power and His love, giving thanks in all circumstances.

Why should a Christian desire to walk in the fullness and control of the Holy Spirit moment by moment as a way of life? There are several important reasons: to please and honor the Lord, who delights to have fellowship with His children; to enjoy a fuller, richer, more exciting life with our Savior and with others; and to be more fruitful in your witness for your Savior.

Sharing Christ with others as an expression of gratitude and as an act of obedience to the Lord is the natural result of walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

Since every Christian is commanded to be a witness for our Lord, not to be involved and committed is to disobey Him and would indicate that the Christian is not walking in the control of the Holy Spirit.

As you walk in the Spirit and faithfully apply the revolutionary concept of *Spiritual Breathing*, you too can become a member of the great multitude of fruitful disciples whom God is raising

up around the world to work, to plan, to pray and to witness for Christ - to help fulfill the *Great Commission* of our Lord in this generation.

### Self-Study Guide

1. How do the accounts of the following people demonstrate their walk in the Spirit?
  - a. Paul - Acts 18:4-11 (See Philippians 4)
  - b. Peter - Acts 3:1-26 (See Acts 4:13)
  - c. Stephen - Acts 6:8-15 (See Acts 7:51-60)
2. What does it mean to you to cast your cares upon the Lord? How can you do this?
3. What does the example of the vine and branches in John 15:1-8 mean to you in your Christian life?
4. How would you describe the effects of spiritual fitness as expressed in "*Spiritual Breathing*." (See Romans 14:23, 1 John 1:9, 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 5:18; 1 John 5:14,15)
5. What promise does God make to you in 1 John 2:1-6?
6. List any areas of your life in which "self" is on the throne. List the areas in which Jesus is not on the Throne. What practical steps will you take this week to give Jesus Christ control of those areas where "self" is on the throne?
7. What armor used to defend you against the world, the flesh and the devil does Ephesians 6:11-18 describe?
8. What do these verses teach about the role of prayer in the life of the believer?
  - a. Hebrews 4:15,16
  - b. James 5:16
  - c. 1 Samuel 12:23
  - d. James 1:5
9. How can you experience the "abundant Christian life"? Does "abundant" mean that your life will be free from struggles and hardships? Explain.
10. What do these verses promise you as you trust God?
  - a. Job 12:9,10
  - b. Psalm 16:1
  - c. Ecclesiastes 2:24-26
  - d. Isaiah 40: 10,11
  - e. Isaiah 41:10
11. What place do feelings have in a life of faith? What will result if you seek feelings over and above walking by faith?
12. What do these verses say about thanksgiving? What would result in your life if you failed to "give thanks in all circumstances?"
  - a. 1 Thessalonians 5:18

- b. Philippians 4:11
- c. Psalm 95:2
- d. Philippians 4:6

13. How does Romans 8:28 have practical meaning in your life? What are some of the consequences of not applying this verse?

14. What does John 14:21 tell you about how to have an obedient walk with Christ?

#### **GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Share a recent personal example of how you have applied *Spiritual Breathing* in your life. How has this helped your walk with God?
2. What is the advantage of teaching your children the concept of *Spiritual Breathing* at an early age? How can you implement this practice in your own family? How will breathing spiritually change your own family atmosphere? (If applicable).
3. In your group, share an example of an area in your life where you are likely to depend on feelings rather than faith in God's Word.
4. The Bible says temptation comes to the Christian from the world, the flesh and the devil. Discuss how these sources particularly reveal themselves in today's culture.
5. Relate an instance in your life in which you were especially aware that God supplied your needs. How did you give Him thanks?
6. Think of some practical ways to develop the habit of praising God. How is developing praise as a habit beneficial to your Christian walk?