

WALK IN THE SPIRIT — THE WAR WITHIN

“¹⁶This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷For 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. ¹⁸But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law” (Ga.5:16-18).

Flesh vs Spirit

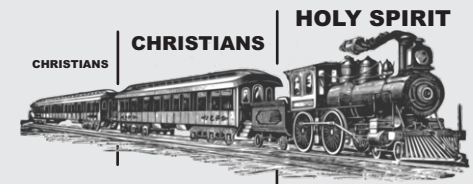
- “If ye be led” (Ga.5:18) is in the passive voice, which emphasizes the Holy Spirit's work.
- Being led by the Spirit is to bear the fruit of the Spirit (Ga.5:22-23).
- The incentive or net result of walking in the Spirit is that we will not gratify the desires of the flesh (Ga.5:16,18).
- To walk in the flesh is to try to fill the emptiness inside using its own resources. It is an expression of the ego, self, or the “old man”. The flesh cannot conceive the idea of satisfying the emptiness by faith (depending on God's power). The flesh prefers to use its own legalistic or corrupt resources to fill its emptiness (Rm.8:7).
- There is a war for control of our lives between our flesh and God's Holy Spirit (Ga.5:17). This war is a sign that you are indwelt by the Spirit. The fight of faith is fought over the Person and promises of God.
- A Christian is one who is at war with the desire to do things in the strength of his flesh versus the power of God's Spirit. If there is no war then the flesh, not the Spirit, is likely in control. Serenity in sin is death.
- Galatians 5:16 promises victory over the desire of the flesh, not that there would be no war. So when we walk by the Spirit the flesh is conquered.
- How do we walk by the Spirit? We must stop trying to fulfill the emptiness of our lives with our own self-interest, and rest in God's promises.
- You allow the Spirit to control you when you rest in the Person and promises of God.



“⁴Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” (Jn.15:4-5)

Abide

- The Holy Spirit's leading is like a locomotive train. We do not follow in our own strength. To walk in the Spirit means that we are hooked to the divine source of power. We trust Him to lead us. The cars do not drive themselves. The train engine pulls the cars along.
- To walk in the Spirit means to “abide in the vine” (Jn.15:4). We are to keep ourselves connected to Christ. This does not mean to strive harder, but to rest or trust in God and His promises from His Word.
- We should not cut ourselves off from the flow of the Spirit (Jn.15:6).



“¹³For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. ¹⁴For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Ga.5:13-14)

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith” (Ga.5:22)

Law of Liberty, Love

- We are called to love which seeks the happiness of others with the same zeal that we seek our own happiness (Ga.5:13; Ja.1:25).
- This is contrary to our natural inclinations making it seem impossible. We do not naturally wake up and feel as much concern for the needs of others as for our own self. This seems utterly beyond our power.
- The answer to this impossibility is to “walk in the Spirit” (Ga.5:16). Love is not our work, but God's. God loves others through us, and directly.
- We are not under the oppressive punishment of the law. The law requires what the Spirit produces, and that is love (Ga.5:14, 22-23).
- The Spirit conquers the emptiness that drives the flesh and it spills out in acts of love which fulfill the law.
- The Holy Spirit works the miracle of renewal in our lives when we meditate on and rest in His marvelous promises (Rm.15:13; 2Pe.1:4).