

Walking in the Spirit: Feeding Our Spirit on God's Word

I. WALKING IN THE SPIRIT: BEING PROACTIVE IN OUR WAR AGAINST LUST

*¹³ For you...have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh...
¹⁶ I say then: walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust (sinful desires) of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts (wars) against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the (holy) things that you wish. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law...²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (Gal. 5:13–18, 25)*

A. In Gal. 5:13, the Holy Spirit's agenda is to grant us liberty. Our "flesh" includes physical pleasures (sensuality, gluttony, alcoholism, etc.) and emotional desires (pride, bitterness, etc).

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (2 Cor. 3:17)

B. In Gal. 5:17, Paul described the violent war that every believer faces. The flesh is waging a full scale war against the Holy Spirit's mandate in our lives. We need a revelation of the violent clash of powers that is involved in this war. We must not get ourselves in a position where we trust our flesh to choose right. It is in violent opposition to the Holy Spirit. We must guard against it.

¹¹ I beg you as...pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. (1 Pet. 2:11)

⁵ For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, (set their minds on) the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor can be. (Rom. 8:5-7)

²¹ I find then a law (principle), that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. ²² For I delight in the law of God...²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law (principle) of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ I thank God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. (Rom. 7:21-25)

C. The war will not just go away. The Holy Spirit in us is greater than the devil and the flesh, but His power works in us only as we actively engage with the Him. We cannot make peace with our spiritual dullness, barrenness and bondage. This war is real. There is nothing comparable to the life the Spirit gives our heart. We need to be replenished daily.

⁴ He (Holy Spirit) who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. (1 Jn. 4:4)

D. In Gal. 5:16, Paul gives us an essential command, "Walk in the Spirit," with a great promise, "You shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." We desire to see this promise fulfilled more in us.

- E. We can only find liberty from sinful fleshly desires as we maintain a vibrant relationship with the Holy Spirit. Paul used three verbs to describe a dynamic interactive relationship with the Spirit. He called us to **walk** in the Spirit (v. 16), to be **led** by the Spirit (v. 18), and to **live** in or by the Spirit (v. 25). We pursue these three facets of the “diamond” of our relationship with the Spirit.
- F. We must be **proactive** in our relationship with the Spirit as the only way to overcome our lusts. It is not enough to believe in or to possess the Spirit; we must live in active fellowship with Him.
¹⁴ ***...The love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Cor. 13:14, NAS)***
- G. To “walk” in the Spirit (v. 16) means to walk out our daily life choices by embracing what the Spirit values and refusing what the Holy Spirit is grieved by (Gal. 5:19-22). We must be determined to walk in the Spirit’s values and make continual quality choices.
- H. To be “led” by the Spirit (v. 18) is to follow His leadership by being watchful of the Spirit’s promptings, especially in our spiritual life (thoughts, words and deeds). We honor instead of ignore the Spirit’s leadership in the small decisions of our spiritual life. We cultivate an awareness of the Spirit’s leadership in **what we say** (speech), **what we look at** (eyes), **how much time we give to feed our spirit** (schedule) and **how we spend our finances** (money). The one who has minimal fellowship with the Spirit, will walk in lust. We must refuse the lie that the Holy Spirit is not Lord, viewing His promptings as optional. This is devious. We love Him and cannot do well without His leadership. We want to be led by the Spirit and to engage Him more.
- I. To “live” in or by the Spirit (v. 25) is to be empowered with the Spirit’s life as we are fed by the Spirit’s food which is the Word of God. It matters how much time we give in our schedule to feed our spirit. One who has an under-nourished spirit will walk in lust. Our authority is found in our inner life with the Spirit. We need the release of God’s life within us that the Spirit promises.
- J. As we pursue all three facets of the “diamond” of our relationship with the Spirit (walk, led and live by the Spirit) then we are renewed in the spirit of our mind (atmosphere of our inner man).
²³ ***Be renewed in the spirit of your mind 24 and...put on the new man... (Eph. 4:23-24)***
² ***Be transformed by the renewing of your mind... (Rom. 12:2)***
- K. We remove darkness from a room by turning on the light, not by taking out buckets of darkness.
⁵ ***Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend (overpower) it. (Jn. 1:5)***
- L. We declare war on everything that quenches the Holy Spirit and thus, our spirit. We refuse to grow accustomed to a quenched and dull spirit. The Spirit beckons us to a continual flow of life-giving fellowship with Him. The Holy Spirit is our only power source to overcome sinful lust.
- M. We resolve to fill our heart with God’s Word because we know that the “voice of the Spirit and the Word” is much stronger than the “voice of sinful lust.”

II. OUR INHERITANCE IS A FULLY ALIVE HEART AND MIND IN GOD

¹⁶ "This is the covenant (promise) that I will make with them... "I will put My laws (Word) into their hearts (emotions) and in their minds (understanding) I will write them..." (Heb. 10:16)

A. **Mind:** God promises to release the spirit of revelation to our mind until we progressively gain living understanding of His Word. **Heart:** God promises to empower our emotions until we feel the power of His Word with new holy desires. God promises to write His Word on our heart and mind (2 Cor 3:3) as He wrote the ten commandments on tablets of stone (Ex. 31:18).

³² **Did not our heart burn (with desire) within us...while He opened the Scriptures to us?...45 He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. (Lk. 24:32, 45)**

B. God writes His Word on our heart as we live by it. We are to live by or be spiritually healthy in our heart by feeding on God's Word. Our heart lives and becomes strong and healthy by feeding on God's Word in spirit and truth. The opposite is also true. Our heart dies and becomes weak and sick without feeding on God's Word. The most substantial way in which we feed our spirit and bolster our spiritual strength is by feeding on God's Word in spirit and truth (each applies this differently). Many are spiritually in the ICU with a sick heart and a diminished spiritual appetite. The "voice of the Spirit and the Word" is stronger than the "voice of sinful lust."

⁴ **He (Jesus) said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" (Mt. 4:4)**

C. Prayer, fasting, meditation on the Word, and obedience positions our heart before God to freely receive. These activities do not earn us God's favor. **Analogy:** we put our cold heart before the bonfire of God's presence by seeking Him in the Word in spirit and truth. God opens His Word to us progressively (little portions) and in accordance to the time we feed our spirit on His Word.

III. ENCOUNTERING GOD: PRAY-READING THE WORD (COMMUNING WITH THE WORD)

³⁹ **You search the Scriptures (Bible study), for in them you think you have...life; these are they which testify of Me. 40 You are not willing to come to Me (dialogue) that you may have life. (Jn. 5:39-40)**

³⁹ **Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard (encountered) His word. (Lk. 10:39)**

A. It is not enough to study the Word, we must give our heart to God and receive from Him as we read it. We allow it to create an active dialogue with God as it gives us the "conversational material." We must actually speak the Word back to God and against Satan's attack on our lives. Many do not speak the Word back to God or against Satan (they only speak it to others).

B. Two broad categories of truth related to pray-reading the Word (meditating on Scripture): First, Scriptures that focus on exhorting us "**to believe**" God's Word. For example, use Scriptures that declare that God loves, forgives, leads, protects, or provides for us, etc. Second, Scriptures that focus on exhorting us "**to obey**" God's Word. For example, use Scriptures that command us to bridle our tongue, serve one another, humble ourselves, give time and money to Him, etc.

- C. We actively dialogue with God by praying truths back to Him that exhort us **“to believe”** His Word. Spiritual warfare: we speak these truths against Satan’s attack on our lives.
1. First, **we thank God** for a particular truth. We turn these truths into simple declarations of thanksgiving or trust. For example, we declare, “Thank you that You love me or have forgiven me. I trust that You will lead, provide and protect me.
 2. Second, **we ask God to reveal** (release) particular truths to us. Ask God to release a spirit of revelation (Eph. 1:17). For example, pray, “Father, reveal to me the certainty of Your provision, how much You love me, forgive me, or how I have ravished Your heart. Father, I ask You to release Your promised guidance, provision, and protection, etc.
- D. We actively dialogue with God by praying truths back to Him that exhort us **“to obey”** His Word. Spiritual warfare: we speak these truths against Satan’s attack on our lives.
1. First, **we commit ourselves to obey God** in the specific way set forth in a biblical person or passage. Make simple declarations of your resolve to obey the Word or imitate the faith of the godly. For example, declare, “I set my heart to love You and obey You with my speech, time and money, etc. or, I set my heart to love you like David, endure hardship like Paul, pray like Daniel or do miracles like the apostles in the Book of Acts.”
 2. Second, **we ask God to empower us to obey** a particular truth or imitate the example of the godly. Ask God for help to obey in specific areas. For example, pray, “Father help me to love You, to bridle my speech, or to use my time and money in full obedience.” Pray, “lead me away from temptation (Mt. 6:13) or deliver me from the works of the evil one” (Jn. 17:15), or, “Father, I resolve to love You more, or give me power to love you like David, endure hardship like Paul, pray like Daniel or do miracles like the first apostles.”
- E. Two ways to focus our mind in seeking God: God on His Throne (Rev. 4) and God in our spirit
¹⁴ *...The love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Cor. 13:14, NAS)*
³⁸ *Out of his heart (belly, KJV) will flow rivers of living water... (Jn. 7:38)*
- F. **Linger in God’s presence:** in dialoging with God in the Word. Take time to linger as you speak slowly to God (include declaring your love and praise, praying with your spirit and being quiet).
- G. **Journaling:** take time to record thoughts and prayers as you “pray-read” through Scripture. This helps us capture the truths that the Spirit gives us and to grow in our prayer dialogue with God. The anointing of the Spirit in you is your best teacher. When you pray the Word in spirit and truth, you and the Spirit work together to provide you with a tailor made teaching in the Word.
²⁷ *The anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things... (1 Jn. 2:27)*

IV. EXAMPLES OF PRAY-READING THE WORD

- A. Jesus promises to reveal the Father's personality to us as the way to impart love in us for God. **Pray:** I thank You for desiring to reveal Your Father's heart to me, please release it. I thank You for Your commitment to impart Divine love to my heart, please release it. I set my heart to be filled with the knowledge of God and walk in love for You. Spirit, help me do this consistently.
- ²⁶ *I (Jesus) have declared to them Your name (Father's), and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them. (Jn. 17:26)*
- ³⁷ *You shall love the LORD...with all your heart...and with all your mind. (Mt. 22:37)*
- B. God promises to show His power to those who are loyal to Him. **Pray:** I thank You for desiring to show Yourself strong in me, please release it. I set my heart to be loyal to the Holy Spirit's leadership in all that I do with my speech, eyes, actions, time and money and with my commitment to prayer with fasting (Sacred Trust). Release Your power to help me walk this out.
- ⁹ *For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. (2 Chr. 16:9)*
- C. Jesus promises to manifest God's presence to those who obey His commandments. **Pray:** I thank You for desiring to manifest Your presence to my heart, please release it. I set my heart to keep (obey) Your Word in my speech, time, money, etc. Holy Spirit, help me to do this. **Note:** the Father loves everyone in the sense of valuing, caring for and pursuing them. However, He only loves the lifestyle, choices, sacrifices and fruit of those who pursue 100-fold obedience.
- ²¹ *He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him... (Jn. 14:21)*
- D. We are called to obey the Holy Spirit's leadership in our speech. God promises that our whole body (our human passions) will be bridled as we obey the Spirit in our speech. **Pray:** I set my heart to keep (obey) Your Word in my speech. Holy Spirit, help me to do this with consistency.
- ³ *Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; Keep watch over the door of my lips. (Ps. 141:3)*
- ²⁹ *Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit.... (Eph. 4:29-30)*
- ² *If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body (human passions)...6. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. (Jas 3:2-6)*
- ¹⁴ *Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may be blameless. (Phil. 2:14)*
- ¹⁸ *In everything give thanks...19 Do not quench the Spirit. (1 Thes. 5:18-19)*

- E. God promises to save or deliver those who lay aside filthiness as they meditate on His Word. **Pray:** I thank You for desiring to deliver my soul from filthiness in me, please release it. I set my heart to lay aside all filthiness and to implant your Word in my heart with meditation and meekness. Please help me to do this with consistency.
- ¹ Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh (sensuality, addictions, etc.) and spirit (pride, anger, etc.), perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Cor. 7:1)*
- ²¹ Lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save (liberate, deliver) your souls. (Jas 1:21)*
- F. God promised that we are a new creation based on giving us the gift of God's righteousness. **Pray:** I thank You and declaration my trust that you have given me the righteousness of God, please reveal it to me more by the spirit of revelation. I declare, that all things are new and the old things of my guilt has passed away in Your sight.
- If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new...21 For He (Father) made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor. 5:17-21)***