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SPEAKER

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God In Us

PART

3

TITLE

Walking By The Spirit

SCRIPTURE

Galatians 5:16-26



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What's great to see you, Providence family. If you're a guest with us we're glad you're here. If you are at home or somewhere away on livestream we're glad that you joined us as well. It's always great to see your face. If you have a Bible, if you want to turn with me to the Book of Galatians. We're going to be in Chapter 5, and we'll start reading in a few minutes.

Years ago, when our sons were little... We have three sons, and when they were really little but gaining a desire for independence we went to the beach and because they were little I needed to stay close. Because they were independent they didn't want to hold hands in the waves.

So we're out there, and as you can imagine the wave comes up, smashes into one of them, and he goes circling in the wave. It only took about a second or two or maybe three to grab him and to pull him out of the water, but I'll never forget looking through the water when I came over him and locking eyes with him and seeing the terror in his eyes as we looked at each other's eyes through the water, and I'll never forget his relief when he was rescued.

That was just one example. You have many examples as well that teach us that life is hard and it's really good to walk with people who can help us and who can lend us a hand.

What's interesting is that God created us like this, and not only did God know that we needed to walk with one another, that we were not created to walk alone, we weren't created to walk without him either. Therefore, when we sin against God and walked away from him we see this pattern throughout the pages of scripture where God graciously and progressively drew closer to us in order to walk with us.

In the pages of the Old Testament God most of the time primarily is seen as sort of being above the people, beyond the people, but he promised all the people that one day would come when God's son would be sent to the earth, and in the fullness of time that's exactly what happened. God sent Christ to the earth, and not only did he live without sinning, he died for our sins and rose again. But before he did that dying and rising he didn't just live above us and beyond us. He was with us.

Remarkable is right before he went to the cross he met with his disciples and he said it's to your advantage that I'm going to go away, because if I go away the Holy Spirit is going to come to you. The Holy Spirit comes not simply to live beyond us and around us, but he lives to be with us, and he comes and he lives in us.

It's really a remarkable thing, and we're in a series on the Holy Spirit. It's called God in Us. I know that these kinds of series, they provoke all kinds of different feelings, whether it's confusion, or skepticism, or enthusiasm, or excitement, or creativity, or hope, or possibility, and I just want to encourage us to keep looking to him, for everything that comes from his hand is a good thing.

Let me pray for us. Father, we bow before you and we want to walk with you. I pray for those who are in the

room or perhaps who listening online. I ask God that you would help them to begin a relationship with Jesus Christ that allows them to walk with you, to experience your strength, and your power, and your kindness, and your goodness as you are with them, as you are in them.

I pray for those of us who know Christ, and who love Christ, and who are trusting Christ today, and who know maybe a portion, maybe we've tasted of the power of the Holy Spirit, the joy of the Holy Spirit, the peace of the Holy Spirit, the healing power of the Holy Spirit, and yet maybe not to the level that you know is possible.

We ask God that you would give us everything that you desire and that you would help us to be open to it. We pray all of this in Christ's name. Amen.

When Jesus' followers, when they received the Holy Spirit, we saw this in Acts 2 last week, the very first thing that they were inclined to do is the very thing Jesus said would happen, and that is that when they received the Holy Spirit power would come upon them, and with that power they would become witnesses, here, there and everywhere.

So Jesus' followers, they took the gospel to different parts of their space, of their world at the time, and many of them went to a region called Galatia. It was a region, not a city. There was lots of cities and towns, villages within this region. The gospel went there because these believers went there. They wanted to share what they had received.

So they get there and they're explaining to people that Jesus lived without sin and yet he died for ours. He wrote it again, this forgiveness in Jesus' name, and people began believing in Jesus. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and they were baptized. They were forgiven of their sin. They were changed.

They learned something that all of us will learn if we trust Christ, and that is growing spiritually is hard. All of that enthusiasm and energy in those early days, all of a sudden they're confronted with patterns of their flesh, with attitudes they've had for so long, with broken relationships. They were already broken, and all of a sudden it's like, man, where's the power? Where's the power that's available to me to live a new life?

At the very same time that these believers started imagining and seeing how hard it is to grow, false teachers came and began teaching a different gospel, and it was a Jesus plus gospel. Every culture, including our own, has a Jesus plus gospel that is peddled to Christians, or to people who will potentially follow Christ, and it's simply this, it's Jesus plus something that we bring to the table.

Jesus gets almost up to the top of the hill, but we have to push it over the edge. A lot of these people, they grew up in a system as Jewish people to where there was a system of works, that if they could obey the law by performing and keeping the law, and being under the law, and trying to measure of the law that God would

pour out his mercy and his grace upon them if they performed well enough.

So many of these people, they came into the church and they started saying okay, here's the deal, it's Jesus plus the works of the law. It's Jesus plus the Jewish festivals, and celebrations, circumcision and obedience. And it's not just obedience to God's law, it's obedience to every generation's take on God's law, all of the laws that were built for one generation to keep God's law. And all the next generation, they create laws, and so all of a sudden now there's hundreds of law.

Jesus comes on the scene and he does what nobody has ever done. He fulfilled all of God's laws perfectly and he died for us. So it's in this environment that Paul wants to rescue this church, so he begins in verse 1 and 2. He writes to the churches in Galatia. He says, "Grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, to deliver us from the present evil age according to the will of our God and Father."

So even in his introduction, he's like I'm just going to throw the gospel in my hello to these people as well. He says Jesus Christ gave himself in order to deliver us from something that we cannot and have not been able to do for ourselves, and he did all of this according to the will of God.

But then he immediately does something that he does in no other letter. In every other letter he offers a welcome, and then he gives some commendation, hey, we've heard about your hope, and your peace, and the joy that you have. You're doing a great job. Here's a few suggestions on how to live as a Christians. In Galatians there's no commendation.

The very first thing after saying hello is this, "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel, not that there is another one." It was called a gospel, good news, by the false teachers, and he says anything that requires our performance in addition to Jesus is not good news, because we never perform well. It's never enough. It never has been enough. So some of the believers are like well, okay, we got to trust Jesus to be saved, but then we got to white knuckle our own growth. We're like this is where the power is. I'm going to be patient today. Today I'm going to be really patient and joyful today. I'm going to really work at being joyful today.

So Paul comes to us in chapter 3, verse 3, and he says, "Having begun by the Spirit are you now being perfected by the cross?" Then he goes back and he shares the gospel again with them, in chapter 3, verse 10. He says, "For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse." What's the curse? We've never measured up to the works of the law, so we're all guilty.

But what did Christ do for us? Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. He took our sin, he took our weakness, he went to the cross in all of his perfection and he died for it, and what do we get as a result? He says, "So that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith."

So now he gets to hard tacks. Chapter 5, starting at verse 16, he's saying this, since we're not under the law anymore and since God has given us his Spirit to give us power to grow, verse 16, then walk by the Spirit. "You will not gratify the desires of the flesh, for the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed from each other. They keep you from doing the things that you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law."

"The works of the flesh are evident, sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God, but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law, and those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with his passions and desires. We live by the Spirit. Let us also keep in step with the Spirit."

If we are to know the power of the Holy Spirit that we saw last week, then we must learn how to practice the presence of the Holy Spirit, or as Paul says it, "To walk by the Spirit." I want to show you first of all what happens if we do walk by the Spirit. What he says will happen if we do. Then at the end I want to show us how to walk by the Spirit.

What happens if we do? The first thing if we're walking by the Spirit, this changes our deepest desires, our deepest desires. This is so important, because we're all driven by our desires, and our desires are remarkably powerful. If you think about it, our desires in our heart, they influence us as effectively as a little bit in the mouth of an enormous horse.

We all follow our desires. Another way to say it is we all do what we want to do, even when our desires are evil, fatal, shameful, unless we're governed by a greater desire. This is where it is so critically important... All of us know conflicting desires, and so if I said to you you're desires are undefeated, some of you go that's not true, because last night I wanted cake but I'm trying to lose some weight so I didn't eat the cake.

But you understand what you just said is that your greater desire was undefeated in that moment. But in that moment, if you wanted the cake more than a number on a scale, well then that was the greater desire. It's hard to imagine that we are pulled around, as capable as we are, like a horse by a little bit. The desires of our heart are incredibly powerful.

So what does he say happens? He says, verse 16, "Walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." Let's talk first of all about this word flesh, because in the New Testament it doesn't necessarily mean like flesh and bone, like skin. By the word flesh, he's talking about our old nature that is not in love with Jesus, but that loves everything that hurts Jesus.

It's hard for us to imagine that we would ever do that, but that's exactly true. If Jesus was standing here and if there was a pile of behaviors and attitudes here that broke Jesus' heart and that Jesus died for, the flesh not

only, not only do we not love Jesus, but we actually begin loving, and loving intensely, the things that break his heart. This is what the flesh is.

The flesh, he tells us, which we all have one, it has desires. We look at that word desire, and we go it kind of wants to. The word in Greek is actually a compound word. [Foreign language 00:14:51], that's the word. What it means is epic desire.

For example in Luke 15, Jesus wants to tell a parable, and when he's telling his parable he's not describing two people. He's describing all people. In his parable he's inserting details that's true of all of humanity, and what it says is this. There's one son in particular that looks at his dad and he says you're not dead, but I really don't want any relationship with you, so let's just act like you are. I want you to give me my inheritance and I'll go and I'll leave you, and the dad says okay.

He goes out and he squanders everything and he runs out of money and now he needs a job. So he hires himself out to guard the farm's pigs. This is a Jewish culture. They're not big on pigs, like that's not their thing. They're repulsive. What does this say? As he's feeding the pigs it says that his heart began to long after the pods that the pigs ate. He began a [foreign language 00:16:06], an epic desire. I want that. Now think about what Jesus is doing in a parable about human nature. What he's saying is that when we give ourselves over to the flesh and we follow the flesh of epic desires is that we soon long after what today or yesterday we found repulsive.

What it says is that not only does our flesh have desires, but these desires move our hand to do specific work. So in verse 19 through 21 it says these desires, they create works of the flesh, and he lists this horrible list of behaviors that all of us are saying that's not good. And then he says, "and things like these," which means that this isn't the complete list. This is just a representative sampling of things that we do when we're following the desires of our flesh.

But what I want you to see at this point in time when you look at this list is that if you've done any of these things it's because you wanted to. I've said this so many times so that we would deal with the heart and not simply the symptoms, but your greatest problem isn't that you sinned last night. Your greatest problem is your heart wanted to.

What would happen if your heart didn't want to? Think about how easy it would be to live in victory if your heart didn't want to do these things. So what does God do? Well, God sends his Spirit. When we trust Christ into our heart then what does the Holy Spirit do? He begins planting into our heart new desires, and these new desires create a war, which is what verse 17 says, the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh. They're opposed to each other, meaning they're not just opposite desires, they're oppositional desires.

They're in contention with one another, to keep you from doing the things that you want, to keep you from doing the things that you want. Isn't that true? Like there are some times when you really want to sin, but then all of a sudden there's a greater epic desire towards righteousness, and it causes us not to. But sometimes it's the other way around.

Just like Paul, there are times when we look and we're like I want to be pure, but right now I really want to be impure. I really want to not set anything before my eyes that's going to defile my heart, but I really want to look. I really want peace in my relationships and I want to be a peacemaker, and yet right now in this marriage, or in this friendship, or toward my kids I have a barbed word that I just want to say that's going to cause division.

So we have these competing, conflicting desires, but this is the good news, as we walk with the Spirit... So we trust Christ, the Holy Spirit comes in and starts planting little desires that grow over time, but as we walk with the Spirit those desires begin to grow bigger. First they're little, tiny, and so we come to Christ and all of a sudden we have these little desires, and all of a sudden we have these old epic desires of the flesh, and sometimes we stumble all over ourselves because these desires are so small.

But as we continue to walk with the Spirit, which we'll talk about how later, these desires begin to grow, and suddenly they get stronger, bigger, thicker and more fruitful. Sudden they become the epic desire of our day. So it says in verse 18, "If you're led by the Spirit you're not under the law." What does that mean? It means two things.

First it means that the Holy Spirit reminds our hearts that we're no longer condemned by the law. Sometimes just read Romans 7. Paul, he's just talking about a conflicted man, he's a discouraged man to a part. He's just like, man, it just kills me, like in my heart there's this love for the law of God, and yet in my members, in my flesh, my mouth, my eyes, my desires, my passions, my impulses, my attitudes, there's another law that wants the flesh.

So then he ends, and he goes who is going to deliver me from myself? What did he say? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ, our Lord, for Jesus came to the earth, he lived without sin, he died for our sins, he was buried, he rose from the dead, and he says if you'll put your trust in me I will forgive you of your sins and give you my righteousness.

When we say yes to him the Holy Spirit comes and lives within our hearts, and then in the very next verse he says, "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who know Christ." That sort of means at least half of it is not to be under the law if we live by the Spirit, is that even in the darkness of our imperfection we're reminded by the Spirit that we have the righteousness in Christ to say yesterday, today and forevermore it is there regardless of our performance.

But there's another thing that he does which is equally powerful, and that is that the Holy Spirit realigns our hearts so that we're not burdened by the law. In 1 John 5, he says, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome."

Have you ever read the Bible and it's like, man, that's a burden? Why is that? Because we don't want to do it. But think about how amazing it would be if the epic desire of your heart when you read this and go that's who I want to be, I want to be like that, I want those characteristics to be dominant in that life, I want that kind of purity, you want that, then all of a sudden nothing is burdensome when you want it. It's just what you want. Isn't it true that it's really easy to sin even as a believer if we want to? And it's also true that it's very easy not to sin when you don't want to sin that way. Some of us, we have been in some environment where somebody maybe has said to us, "Man, it's just amazing. I can't believe you didn't fire back and insult them back like the way they insulted you." Or, "Man, I can't believe that you didn't gawk about all of those girls like all of the guys that were in your group when they saw those girls."

What looks like amazing self-control is actually just doing what you want to do. That's when power for the Christian life and power for growth really takes off, is that when the chief epic desire of your heart is simply to want to do what pleases him. It's to want to obey. Then it gets pretty easy because it's what you want to do. So he changes our deepest desires.

Second thing, he produces desirable fruit. When we walk by the Spirit it produces desirable fruit. All of us know that in this world we are all divided up into little groups and in each of the groups they have some very specific value systems. There are certain places where certain behavior, it's fitting in one group and it's not fitting in other groups.

So just imagine the quality of goodness that must be bound up in a particular behavior or a list of behaviors that no people in the entire world would want to make a law against God. Look what it says though in Verse 22, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no wrong."

There's no country that makes a law against relational patience. Even heaven doesn't have a law against these things through the fruit of the Spirit. And you notice he changes metaphors. How many of you notice that, the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit? He could have said the weeds of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit, or he could have said the works of the flesh and the works of the Spirit. So why does he change metaphors?

I think it's for this reason. Works are what we do when we are gratifying the flesh and fruit is what appears when, verse 24, "We crucify the flesh and walk by the Spirit." You notice things about fruit, a fruit tree. He uses a garden and fruit trees as an example for a reason.

One of the things that's true about a fruit tree and is true about spiritual growth is that fruit is gradual. You

don't just walk out and there's no fruit and the next day you have fully formed apples and they're all totally sweet, they're all ripe. No. It takes time to get there, doesn't it?

It's interesting, you can't even observe growth, you can only measure it. even if you actually just watched it. Because the growth process, the incremental steps are so small, in order to start with a little apple and make it a big apple it's like you couldn't even see a change. The only thing you can do is test it and measure it, and so it is with spiritual fruit.

You look at how you responded three years ago to an insult, and then all of a sudden you look at how you responded this week to an insult and you say, "You know what? I didn't do the same thing." It's a good thing. It's growth.

Not only is this fruit gradual, it's inevitable. When the Holy Spirit of God comes and lives in our heart we change. Our desires change, and therefore our behavior changes, and even our pleasure and sin changes, and the reason is because whatever pleasure we might find in sin is now mixed with conviction of the Spirit who lives in our heart, so it's not even that enjoyable.

When you think about how Jesus and how people noticed his character and over time they will notice ours. It's fascinating when you think about this picture, where you see the sidewalk tore up by the tree, you go yeah, the tree is clearly more powerful than the sidewalk. But if we remove that tree and I took an acorn and I simply laid it in the grass where that tree is and I said, "Do you think that one day that this little acorn will be big?"

You go, "No way." Little thing. Look how thick it is. Look how powerful it is. Look how strong it is. So it is with the Holy Spirit. Some of us, we have patterns and habits and broken relationships, and we feel like it's so thick and strong, there's nothing that could change it, but the Holy Spirit is like an acorn that drives down into the heart and has such power and that change is inevitable.

Last, that fruit is something that rises together. Some of us were convinced when we read this, we were like it's probably just bad grammar. It should be fruits of the Spirit are, because he lists nine of them. He would fail English class, like the fruit, and then all of a sudden he gives nine fruits.

One of the most important things you can know about spiritual growth is it's very much like the tide. It rises together or it doesn't rise at all. Your joy is not more mature than your patience. You look at those fruits, and sometimes we have like little Bible studies, and they're like which one of these come more natural to you? They all appear when the conditions are right.

You say really? Like prove it. Let me try to. 1 John 4, "If anyone says I love God and hates his brother he's a liar." That's pretty bold, isn't it? But notice he doesn't say if you love God or you say you love God and you

hate your brother you're imbalanced. You just need a little more maturity because one part of your love is a little bit more mature than the other part of your love. No, he says you're just a liar. You're not seeing things accurately. You're not saying things accurately. In other word this fruit, it rises together like the tide, and this is why it's so visible to people.

The last thing I want you to see is that walking by the Spirit develops a life changing relationship. Isn't it true... I know it's true for me that walking with a friend changes the walk. If you're out and you're by yourself and you're on a walk it's a walk. But if you're with a friend, you enjoy the things that they enjoy and you're talking, you can walk a long way and forget you're walking. Walking with a friend changes the walk, especially when that friend is the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity, our friend and helper, our comforter and our keeper.

The Holy Spirit, who has power to heal the sick, has power to calm our storms, who causes thirsty souls to become the river's mouth, living water, who's our friend who convicts us of sin and confirms his pleasure in our righteousness, whose our guide in the light of day and our light in the dead of night, who points us every day to Jesus Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith, it is this Holy Spirit who wants to walk with us, and when you walk with him it changes the walk. It changes lives. That's where he gets to in verse 25. He says, "If we live by the Spirit let us also keep in step with the Spirit."

So what I want to do in the remaining minutes that we have is to simply look at a few applications of how do we walk with the Spirit. Hopefully by now you're a little intrigued, it's desirable, you're like, "Wait a minute, are you telling me that there's actually a way that my epic desire could be for things that bring me nobility and honor instead of guilt and shame, and you're actually telling me that there's something I can do that would create fruit that literally no culture, including heaven, would create a law against it because it's so noble?"

"You're telling me that there's actually a way to walk with a friend through the difficulties of life, and that friend would be the third person of the Trinity? You're telling me that? That's attractive, so how do we do it?" The very first thing that must be done before we keep in step with the Spirit is get in step with the Spirit. For those of you who are in Christ, you are in step. For those of you who have never trusted Christ, there is a problem, and that problem is you're not even reconciled relationally with God, who wants to walk with you. So the Bible tells us that Jesus came to the earth, he lived without sin, he died for our sin, he rose from the dead on the third day, and he says to us if we will stop trusting in our performance to try to keep the law, but if we will trust in who he is, and what he's accomplished, and how he died, and how he rose from the dead, that he will take away our sin, he will give us his righteousness, and reconcile us to God, the Father.

This is where the power begins. It begins by being reconciled to God. Have you trusted in God's provision for the forgiveness of your sins? You can do that right now. If that's where you're at, please, I beg you, stop listening to me and start talking to him. Call out to him and say, "I believe. I trust you. I see what you've done. Save me from my sins. Forgive me." He made a promise that all who call upon his name will be saved, so call

upon his name. Suddenly what you'll find is now all of a sudden you're on a walk, beginning a relationship with God almighty. I promise you it is the best day of our lives.

For those of us who are in Christ, who have already done that, let me give you a few more applications. The first thing I would encourage any believer to do is begin your daily walk with an admission of weakness. I don't mean exercise walk, I mean just your day. Begin your day with an admission of weakness. What does that mean?

Years ago somebody taught me these truths and he said this is how I would encourage you early in the morning. All these years later I continue to pray, "God, I believe that I have everything in me that is necessary to ruin every good thing in my life in a matter of minutes. Would you please protect me from myself? Would you cause your desires to become my epic desires? Would you help me to walk a straight line, and not just walk it out of obligation or that it's burdensome, but want to?"

The apostle Paul said of himself in Romans 7, "I know that nothing good dwells in me that is in my flesh." There's a lot [inaudible 00:33:50] that's really good, because you're created in the image of God, but not in your flesh, that part of you that doesn't love Christ instinctually and that loves everything that hurts him.

There's a lot of us who say things and do things, or maybe we've seen other people who say and do things, they get on TV, the celebrity apology, "That's not really who I am." That exactly who you are. If it came out of your mouth it's because there was the desire to say it that was actually in your heart. It may not be the dominant or only desire, but it's part of that old person.

So first I'm going to encourage you to begin your daily walk with an admission of weakness, and second, pursue a friendship with the Holy Spirit. To keep in step with somebody is to walk in sync with them. It's to walk at the same pace and to walk on the same path. When you have a friend and you're out walking what does it mean to keep in step with that friend? It means to acknowledge they're there. Hey, you're walking next to me. Hello. Right?

Not only that, but you're paying attention and being attentive to what bothers them and what pleases them. In the case of the Holy Spirit, you're relying on them. You know you have a friend next to you who's strong if you get into a pinch. This is what it means to walk with the Holy Spirit, to wake up in the morning and say good morning, to recognize there's another in the room, to be a friend.

I go downstairs after I had said good morning and open up the Bible, and I said, "God, before I open this up, Holy Spirit would you just help me to see things that I haven't seen? Would you teach me things that I don't understand? Would you show me things about myself that need to be understood?" Like paying attention, practicing his presence, and then all of a sudden I finish with the words, I'll begin praying a little bit... All of

a sudden as I'm praying I'm like, "Okay, God, here's my day, here's my calendar, here's who I'm meeting with. Give me some scriptures that... Like I don't even know what we're talking about today, God, but just arm me, prepare me."

Sometimes it's, "God, is there anybody that I need to call? Anyone that needs encouragement? Is there anybody that I should go and do something?" It's just remarkable. Sometimes you're call them and they're like, "What you calling about?" "Well, I just want to see how you're doing." All right, well maybe I missed the signal here, right? But then there's other times where it's like, "Man, it is so amazing that you would call me today."

You go through the day and you're paying attention to him, and you go to bed and thank him for what he's done and made available. "God, thank you that you allowed me to walk through this day, and even before I got into bed I could look into the mirror and not be ashamed of the person I was looking at."

The next application, I encourage you to pursue holiness by quickly repenting in our day. There's a link between our own personal holiness and our pursuit of it and our experience of his power. You say why is that? Because he's called the Holy Spirit. He's not the unholy spirit, he's the Holy Spirit, so to relate to him requires holiness.

Holiness is simply being set apart from the world and set apart to him. There are certain things I can choose that doesn't help me to walk with him, even if they're not forbidden. I want to be with him. I want him to have rule over my life. The fact is the Holy Spirit who lives in us can be grief and he can be glad, so pursuing holiness is never done by listing a bunch of rules. It's by listening to a friend and responding quickly.

This is where a lot of us, we roll off the road when it comes to holiness, because we think this is what it means to be holy, it's these 50 things, and I'm going to apply them to everyone else's holiness, so if they don't measure up to this standard of holiness then I don't even think they're holy. It's just not holy.

Even in that case you're not being holy. Holiness is walking with the Holy Spirit, and when he convicts you of sin you're like not anymore, quick repentance. And when he moves your heart and inclines you to obey or to serve or to love, give quick obedience to it. All of a sudden you become set apart. You become holy.

There's a metaphor that the Bible loves to talk about, this exchange between obedience and repentance. One of the places you find it is in Ephesians 4. It says, "Put off your old self which belongs to your former manner of life and its corrupt through deceitful desires," there it is, "and be renewed in the spirit of your minds and to put on your old self."

So you walk with the Spirit and suddenly you got an attitude problem, you want cuss, you want to chew

someone out, somebody has insulted you, you're about to insult them, and you do, and all of a sudden now you're wearing this nasty shirt with all these attitudes from former desires, and the Holy Spirit goes hey, change your shirt. You don't have to wear that the rest of the week. That doesn't have to become the pattern. You're so abrasive, like repent.

Then he said at the very end you don't walk around without a shirt spiritually. No, you got to put something else on, the new self, the character of Christ. So we're walking with him to where we're immediately saying I'm not going to do this because he's telling me not to. I am going to do this, and then there's something in the middle, it's a bridge, and it's one of the most important things that you can learn as a believer, because it's all about the mind.

He says, "And be renewed in the Spirit of your minds." You see, whatever captures our imagination will always govern our behavior. So if, for example, a desire of the flesh springs up, pops up within your heart, and you say oh, I want to do that, and you stiff arm the Holy Spirit and begin creatively imaging the pleasure of that sin chances are you'll do it.

But if that very same desire pops its head up within your heart and instead of stiff arming the Holy Spirit you're responding to the Holy Spirit, you're wanting to walk with the Holy Spirit, instead of imagining all the pleasure of sin you start imagining all of the pain and guilt and all the pleasure that would come from having a clear conscience by saying no, you will say no.

So I'm encouraging you to pursue holiness by quickly repenting and obeying. The last thing is to pursue faith by taking a step. Here in just a minute we're going to have an opportunity where some of you can actually take a step of faith. In 29 stories of the gospels where people are being healed there are 26 of those stories where the person's faith is at very least described. 26 out of the 29 the story includes some comment about the recipient's faith.

This is important, because there's a relationship between what we believe God can do and what we see him do. What I found in life is that without faith in my heart I don't even stick around to see if he can do it. Some of us, we have things where we think man, I would love power over this sin problem, I would love power in this broken relationship I would love power over this sickness, I would love power over something.

Some of us there's things that God told us to do, go and do this, and yet we look and we're like there's no way that's going to work. Look, I'm a pastor who grew up with a speech impediment. I get it. I have had the privilege to see him do miracle, after miracle, after miracle. Even today I still have a speech impediment. If you're around me very much, sometimes you can look and my bottom lip will shake, and sometimes I'm pausing. The only thing I'm doing is trying to change a word that I think I can get out.

I could have said no when I was 19, but I was encouraged to take a step of faith, and I have seen his power at work in my life. What about you? You don't even have to have strong, amazing faith. You can have flimsy faith. There's a dad who came in one day and said, "Heal my son." He said, "If you believe he'll be healed." He goes, "I believe a little, but mostly unbelief." Jesus was willing even to take that man's flimsy faith and exercise his grace and power upon his life.

What has he called you to do? Let me pray. Father in heaven, we bow before you and as we prepare to sing, as we prepare to pray, I pray that you would confront our hearts now with where we are not walking with your Spirit and use this time for people who have not come to Christ call out upon your name and be saved. We love you and we need your help. We look to you now. Confront us, God. Show us. Build our faith. Incline our hearts with new desires. Give us new epic desires and allow your power to be seen in our lives, in our homes, our friendships, our workplaces. We pray all of this in Christ's name. Amen.



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