

February 28, 2021 AM
Pastor Ken Hepner

LIVING IN THE SPIRIT
7. “*Staying in Step with the Spirit*”
Galatians 5:24, 25

Introduction:

As we turn to the Word of the Lord God this morning we are looking together at the seventh message in this series regarding walking through life indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. It is the deep longing and desire in the heart of God **to Know each one of us Intimately as His adopted sons and daughters in Christ Jesus.**

One of the eternal purposes of God is that He would have a people who are His children, people who know Him intimately as Savior and Lord, and who love Him so much that we desire to do His will, a people who represent His will and purposes here on earth. Each of us is given the enormous privilege and blessing of partnering with the Spirit of God to touch the lives of people we love in our sphere of influence!

This series of messages is about walking through life attempting to Stay in Step with the Holy Spirit. It is built on asking and answering well this powerful question about the Christian life: How does one become like God? How does one qualify for sonship and daughterhood to God? How does one become Christ-like in the way he/she lives their life on earth?

There are two separate and distinct methods people take in terms of living a godly life:

On the one hand there is God’s eternal purpose to have fellowship with people by His Holy Spirit’s presence living in our hearts, and through this gift of fellowship with us, to create sons and daughters of God who walk through life with Him by faith. As we walk with God by faith we assimilate more of His heart, mind, and will into our lives!

Romans 8:14 – 16 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”

On the other hand there are those who have bought into our enemy Satan’s agenda for people. Satan’s agenda and purpose is to make himself like the Most High God. Isaiah 14:12, it is actually stated! It is his purpose to steal the glory of God, destroy humankind’s ability to walk with God, and to put human beings in bondage to our own efforts at being godly, working hard to make ourselves like God, to live a Christ like life, which ends up in utter futility.

This morning as **we reengage in this look at living life in the Spirit we are going to take an in depth look at what Paul taught the Galatians about the Spirit-led Life.** His counsel was that since the Holy Spirit is a person who lives inside each one of us and since He desires to lead us

into Christ-like and righteous living here and now on earth, let's **Keep in Step with the Holy Spirit**. Galatians 5:24, 25 *"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit let us keep in step with the Spirit."*

Paul, writing under the anointing and inspiration of the Holy Spirit told the believers at Rome in Romans 8:14 that living in the Spirit is to be led by the Spirit. He told the believers at Galatia exactly the same thing in different terminology: He told them that they lived by the Spirit so they should keep in step with the Spirit as He led their lives. This word of counsel gets at the desires that we cherish in our hearts.

There has to be a time in every believer's life when he/she tires of seeing God from a distance, in going through the motions, and having right answers, yet a heart that is dry! There must be a time when **we Engage in a deeper and more passionate Longing to see Him more clearly and know Him more intimately**. We all need a time when we cry out to God in prayer!

"God my Father, Jesus Lord, Holy Spirit, there just has to be more to walking through life than what I am presently experiencing! I don't care what it takes, Lord Jesus; I want to know you more than I presently do! I desire to be cleansed more deeply, freshly washed in your precious blood Jesus, and made pure in heart by your work in my life, Holy Spirit!"

The truth is that the Holy Spirit is the presence of God's holy Person living in you and me.

And He comes to live in you and me with a **definitive Agenda on His Mind and Heart**. This morning the message the Lord has laid on my heart is to share with you, from various portions of Scripture, what is on the Holy Spirit's mind and heart to do with us as He leads us and we seek to keep in step with His leadership.

I. He Brings Glory to the Glorious Person of Jesus:

John 16:13 – 15 *"But when he, the Holy Spirit, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you."*

The role and ministry of the Holy Spirit is to reveal the glory of Jesus' awesome person to each one of us. *"He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you."* He reveals the glory of **the Person and the Power of Jesus** to each us by pointing us to His drawing love and His power to change our lives. He brings glory to Jesus by pointing us to His **Compassionate heart of Love** for each one of us and welcomes each of us to experience this wonderful presence in our lives.

The Lord then makes a simple request of us. When the Holy Spirit reveals the glory of Jesus to us He asks that we give the glory of our hearts to Him **in humble and brokenhearted Worship, Adoration, and Praise**. This is absolutely what we were created for, brothers and sisters, to glorify God and enjoy His presence in our lives. We find our true meaning in life when we engage in Jesus glorifying worship.

As we relate to Him more intimately from the heart, **we begin to See Him much more clearly with the Eyes of our Heart.** Paul wrote to the Ephesians about the nature of his prayers for them and he described this awesome privilege that all believers in Christ Jesus have been given.

Ephesians 1:17 – 19a *“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.”*

I am convinced of the truth that if we can just get one glimpse of the majesty and beauty of who Jesus is and how passionately He loves you and me, everything in our lives will be forever changed. **The Desire to Obey Him emerges from deep within us because of the Vision of who He is and the deep sense of growing Passion to please Him.**

People often ask me why I don't spend more time speaking negatively about sin and stimulating feelings of guilt by what I am opposed to. The answer to that question is really simple for me. It is because I am convinced in my heart that a child who dearly loves his mom and dad is far more likely to do what they ask him to do when he isn't with them, than is a child whose parents have filled him with negative feelings and guilt motivation likely to obey in the absence of his parents.

Why is it that so many people who call themselves Christians are walking passively through life, knowing lots of truth about the Bible, knowing about God, claiming to be saved yet flirting with sin, apathetic about the kingdom of Jesus, and with such a small capacity for deep and soul-searching prayer? Why is it that so many people seem to compromise beliefs and their personal convictions when tempted? Why do we settle for shallow entertainment in our church gatherings and have no heart cry for the deep things of God?

It's because we are not consumed with a burning desire to have a fresh vision of Jesus the glorified Christ, the One who deserves all our praise and honor and the obedience we can render to Him. **Reverence for Jesus, deep and passionate longing to know Him, is the only deterrent I know to keep us from wanting to Eat the Dirt of Sin!** The Holy Spirit's role in my life is to reveal the glory of Jesus to me in my heart of hearts!

II. He Prepares the Body of Christ to Serve His Purposes:

Ephesians 4:11 – 13 *“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”*

Pastor Paul wrote to the Ephesians and to us about how **the Leadership Gifts in the body stimulate us to build up the body of Christ, to unify us, increase our knowledge of Jesus, and mature us in love.** Paul's words in this text tell the readers of the book of Ephesians magnificent truth of God about the leadership gifts we can and should see manifested in our local body at Cedar Grove.

It is the Holy Spirit's job to lead and guide a process of repairing and preparing us all for works of ministry. He says leadership gifts do a work of "katartismos," which is a Greek word that refers to a veterinary medicine. The word means "to set the bones and splint the limb in order to restore a limb that was damaged and broken, restoring it to usefulness again."

There are three great purposes in the heart of the Spirit of Jesus for each one of our lives, binding up areas of wounding and heartache in His healing love, and releasing through us works of ministry that have the affect of building up the body of Christ. Let's look at these three purposes in the heart of the Holy Spirit one at a time.

Unity in the Faith – will take place as the Holy Spirit leads His people who are in Christ Jesus come to acknowledge the truth that we really do exist for what is on the heart of our Lord to accomplish in us and through us. Unity in the faith takes place when we believe God to establish His kingdom ethics in our hearts and lives, and then to use us as instruments and vehicles of His mercy and grace in our sphere of influence.

Intimate Knowledge of the Son of God – will arise in us as the Holy Spirit shows us the splendor of the Person of Christ Jesus. When we focus on the Person of Jesus we see the Son of God who loves us deeply and has shed His love abroad in our hearts. Jesus said we couldn't know Him intimately unless the Father God draws us into this experience.

The Holy Spirit comes to each one of us with a clear agenda from heaven – to glorify Jesus by filling our affections with a deep and passionate desire to know Him more than we presently do. **When Jesus is revealed in us a hunger for purity and longing for personal righteousness is released in our hearts.** We don't grit our teeth and strive to obey. We obey because we have seen Him with the eyes of our hearts and we embrace the desire to please Him.

Maturity – in our personal walk with God is what the Holy Spirit is really after, that we will serve the Lord God out of hearts that burn with love, with desire to be clean, pure, and righteous. Mature Christians don't shrink from sin, secretly wishing we could indulge in sin but we don't for fear of reprisal and losing our good name if we get caught. Mature Christians disdain sin because we have seen Jesus that morning and we don't want to do anything that would affect having that experience again!

III. The Circumcision of the Heart:

In Deuteronomy 30 Moses calls the people to love the Lord their God wholeheartedly, which is the heartbeat of commitment. There is an incredible word to them about what God would do for them in their hearts in response to their choice to love Him. Read with me verse 6: *"The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendents so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul and live."*

Paul reiterates this incredible word about a circumcised heart in Romans 2:29: *"No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God."* And in Colossians 2:11, 12: *"In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision"*

done by the hands of men, but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.”

Circumcision, in the natural realm, is cutting away something useless in order that the physical body is bettered. Why does a medical professional circumcise a little boy? He is doing so to increase the sanctity and sensitivity. Why does God say he will circumcise the hearts of his people? **He is telling us He will cut away what is spiritually useless to us in heaven in order to increase the sanctity we live in and our sensitivity to His voice of direction and leadership in our lives.**

Paul’s concluding words in **Romans 2:29 are that a person who holds still for the cutting work of the Holy Spirit in the heart is a person whose praise is not from men but from God.** As a man who wants to be a follower of Jesus in my life, that is a pretty important sequence of words to me!

And let’s be honest at even deeper levels. Jesus said, “What is highly esteemed among humans is detestable to God.” **God will cut away the things in our hearts that are crowding out spiritual life and health, things that are valued by the world system in which we live.** We are talking about embracing what enables us to enjoy the blessing and favor of God.

Let’s be clear with one another that the Word of God teaches us to value what God values, to keep in step with the Holy Spirit who lives in us. Let’s also be clear on the fact that what the world considers to be blessed – riches, food, status with mankind, is a value system that is not a kingdom ethic. God’s blessing may include material prosperity but often it does not.

IV. Jesus’ Words about Growing Deeper in the Kingdom of God:

John 15:1 – 5 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

The truth is that for growth in kingdom ethics to take place our Father God, whom Jesus calls the master gardener in this passage, will have to do some cutting. And if we are all honest that doesn’t really sound all that appealing to think of cutting work done in us. We are children of America and products of the insidious creeping allure of consumerism, the insatiable quest for material happiness!

--The world’s value system blares at us with alarming regularity: “You are what you have!” “Have more of the things of this world and you will be happy.”

The philosophy behind that statement is that we are ultimately living for the here and now. The Bible calls us to be the people of God in Christ Jesus, who are called to not live for the things

that this world can supply to us. We're asked to make the choice of the heart to live simply, with a generous and giving heart attitude, in the here and now. There is a huge difference between living for something and living in something!

Peter wrote to the followers of Jesus and encouraged us all to think of ourselves as passing through this world on our way to another destination, and therefore to think of the desires we deal with for the things of this world in light of that truth. I Peter 2:11 *"Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul."*

The truth is that material things have a tremendous choking affect on our hearts. **What Jesus wanted all of us to clearly see and understand is that the great American values of riches and pleasures will have a choking affect on our ability to grow in God's kingdom ethics and values!**

--In 1999 our son Dan was entering his senior year in college at Malone College in Ohio. He decided to be my traveling partner to minister to pastors at a pastor's conference in Zimbabwe.

--Here at EBI Dan got to meet people who struggle to get enough food for their families to eat. A young man named Dube, who had a call on his life to preach and pastoral ministry, really touched him. Dube worked on the mission station and only got to see his family, his siblings and his fiancée, once per month when he took the bulk of his salary home so his family could eat.

--When Dan got home we watched him decide he could live with a lot less in his life, so he sold a lot of the possessions he had and gave the money away to people who were less fortunate than he was. He sent money to the BIC hunger fund that fed people in southern Africa. He adopted a four-year-old compassion child. Dan got a kingdom worldview from that two-week in southern Africa. His life will never ever be the same again!

If you are a new Christian you are already a miracle of grace. His glory has taken up residence in you by His Spirit. The proof of that is that He is already changing the way you think, your heart longings, and what you like and desire to do.

If you are a believer in Christ and you hunger and thirst to know Him more intimately than you presently do, that is proof that the life of Jesus is being formed in you. Slowly but certainly, the painful memories of the past in your life and the accompanying grieving over them are being swept away by His glory growing in your heart. You can be confident of this fact, that *"he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion till the day of Christ Jesus."*

Effort, striving, or human techniques do not transform your heart. **Transformation of the human heart and soul is the work of the Holy Spirit** – it springs from beholding Jesus and surrendering to being made like Him. Galatians 5:24, 25 *"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit let us keep in step with the Spirit."*

“LIVING IN THE SPIRIT:
7. Staying in Step with the Spirit”
Galatians 5:24, 25

Introduction:

The Almighty God has purposed in His heart to **K**_____ each one of us **I**_____, as His sons and daughters, by His Presence living in us.

One of God’s eternal purposes is to have a people in whom He dwells and through whom He works on the earth

The series is about **W**_____ through life **I** **S**_____ with the Spirit. It is built on how we answer this question: How does one become like God?

On the one hand there is God’s eternal purpose to walk in fellowship with us, to pour out His Spirit, His nature into our hearts and lives. On the other hand the evil one purposes to put human beings on his agenda, to make ourselves like God by human effort and discipline.

This morning we will look at the text Paul wrote to the Galatians about staying in step with the Spirit, Galatians 5:24, 25.

There must be a time in every believer’s life when we tire of seeing God from a distance. We **E**_____ in deeper **L**_____ to know Jesus more intimately than we presently do!

The Holy Spirit is the person of God come to live in the human heart and spirit, making us alive to God. When He comes into us He has a definite **A**_____ on His **H**_____ and **M**_____!

I. He Brings Glory to the Person of Jesus: John 16:13 – 15

The role and ministry of the Holy Spirit is to reveal the glory of the **P**_____ and **P**_____ of the Lord Jesus, pointing us to His drawing, compassionate love for us!

When He reveals Jesus to us He asks us to give Him the glory of our hearts in humble, brokenhearted **W**_____, **A**_____, and **P**_____.

As we relate to Jesus more deeply we begin to see Him more clearly with the **E**_____ of our **H**_____, Ephesians 1:17 – 19a

The desire to **O**_____ His will for our lives emerges from deep within us because of the **V**_____ of who Jesus is, **P**_____ to please Him.

Reverence for Jesus, deep desire to know Him is the only true deterrent to keep us from wanting to **E**_____ the **D**_____ of **S**_____!

II. He Prepares the Body of Christ to Serve His Purposes: Ephes. 4:11 – 13

The leadership gifts in a local church are established by the Spirit of God to **B**_____ us up, **U**_____ us, and **M**_____ us in love!

It is the Holy Spirit's job to lead and guide a process of repairing and preparing us all for works of ministry. Paul uses the word katartismos in the Greek: "to set and restore a broken limb to usefulness again!"

There are three great purposes in the heart of the Spirit for us all"

1. **U**_____ in the **F**_____
2. Intimate **K**_____ of the Son of God
3. **M**_____ as we learn to walk with Him more deeply

III. The Circumcision of Our Hearts: Deuteronomy 30:6, Romans 2:29

Circumcision done in the human realm ... God is telling His people the Holy Spirit will work to cut away what is useless in heaven, to increase **S**_____ as we live and **S**_____ to His leadership!

Romans 1:29 Paul tells us the person who holds still for the cutting work of the Spirit is one whose praise is from God and not from people!

The Lord God will cut away from our lives things that are **C**_____ **O**_____ spiritual life and health, things **V**_____ by this world system!

IV. Jesus' Words about Growing Deeper Lives: John 15:1 – 5

The truth is for growth in kingdom ethics to take place our Father God, whom Jesus calls the master gardener, will have to do some cutting.

The believer is called to live **I** **T**_____ this world but not be striving **F** **T**_____ of this world. Peter calls us "strangers here" I Peter 2:11

The Spirit of Jesus wants us to see the great American values of riches and pleasures have a **C**_____ **A**_____ on our ability to grow in His kingdom values!

The story of Dan traveling with me to Zimbabwe in 1999 ...

If you are a Christian you are a **M**_____ of His **G**_____. If as a believer in Jesus you hunger and thirst to know Him more intimately that is proof His **L**_____ is being **F**_____ in you! Transformation is His work in our lives as we stay in step with His leading! Galatians 5:24, 25

Discussion Starter Questions for Home Groups

1. The Lord God has an eternal purpose in His heart and mind for human beings. What is that purpose and how is it achieved in life?
2. Why is it important for us to know the Biblical truth that our human effort, our ability to change ourselves is insufficient to deal with heart attitudes and desires?
3. What is the agenda on the heart, mind, and will of the indwelling Holy Spirit in leading us to know Jesus more than we presently do?
4. What do you think Paul meant when he told the Ephesian church and us we see Jesus more clearly with the eyes of our hearts?
5. Do you agree or disagree with the statement reverence for Jesus, the desire to please Him is the only true deterrent to keep us from eating the dire of sin? Why?
6. Do you think most Christians understand the role of the leadership gifts in the body of Christ is to build us up and mature us in unity and love? Why or why not?
7. What is the Holy Spirit seeking to do in our lives when He leads us places of the heart and experiences in life that have a cutting effect in our lives? What is He attempting to help us to see and permit Him to do in our lives?
8. Read together aloud John 15:1 – 8 and share insights you have about the ministry of the Holy Spirit of God in pruning us to make us more fruitful.
9. Read together aloud Colossians 2:6 – 15 and discuss insights you have regarding the Holy Spirit leading us to experiences in life that cut away things that are useless to our spiritual lives here as we live in the Kingdom of Heaven?
10. What do you take away from the message on staying in step with the Holy Spirit's heart, mind, and will for our lives? Can you think of some ways the Lord has walked you through the pruning processes in life? Can you share them with your HOME group members?