Walking in the Spirit

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[0:00] Galatians chapter 5. Continuing our study through the book of Galatians. Galatians chapter 5. Over the last few weeks, we have talked about the stand fast.

Verse 1 there of Galatians 5 says, Stand fast, therefore in the liberty, for Christ hath made you free. And we talked about the fact that those Roman soldiers, the sandals that they wore, they would have little spikes in them, cleat type things, so that when they went and they stood for battle, they would not be pushed backwards.

They were there, planted, ready for whatever they were going to face. God says, Stand fast. Be ready. And then last week, we talked about the fact that we're to stay in the race.

Plant your feet, don't be able to go backwards, and then when it's time, be ready to move forward. To stay in the race, keep moving forward for the Lord Jesus Christ.

And how are we going to do that? Today, we're talking about walking in the Spirit. You're going to move forward, you're going to plant yourself on Jesus Christ, then you're going to stay in the race, you're going to move yourself forward by walking in the Spirit of God.

You're there in Galatians chapter 5. Look at verse 16. Starting at verse 16, it says this, This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. These are contrary one to the other. So that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, wickedness, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murder, drunkenness, revelings, and such like, of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

They that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Let's have a word of prayer. Father, be with us this morning as we look at this passage of Scripture.

Lord, for those who are here this morning who are saved and they know the Lord Jesus Christ, they've asked Him into their life, Lord, help us to understand what it means to walk in the Spirit, to be everything God wants us to be, to follow everything God wants us to follow.

[2:57] For those who are here this morning who do not know Christ as Savior, may it be a time of them learning, opening their hearts to Jesus. Jesus makes all the difference in the world in how we face this life.

Jesus makes all the difference in the world as far as what the next world is going to look like. Lord, I pray that You would help each of us to learn from Your Word this morning, to take it in, make it a part of our life.

Lord, that we might follow Jesus Christ, follow the Spirit everywhere He leads. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. God, I'm going to give you a very profound statement here.

God did not create man to live in sin. That may sound kind of simple, but it's actually a very profound statement.

God did not create man to live in sin. Man made a choice to go that way. He had help. The devil was right in there.

[4:05] What was the devil doing? Do you know what the sin of the garden was? We say, well, they didn't follow God. They ate of the fruit of the tree and stuff. Yes, God had told them not to, but the big sin in the garden was questioning God.

Questioning what He had. Did God really mean this? Did God really say this? Did God say so often we do the same thing, don't we? We come to the Word of God, we look at it, we read it, and say, does He really mean that?

Whenever you think that, the devil's at work. God's Word is true. And God's created us to abide with Him.

You think about Adam and Eve in the garden. Why were they there? That's fellowship with God. But they turned their back and went their own way. God wants us to have fellowship with Him.

God wants us to be with Him. God wants us to have a relationship with Him. And we can. Some people think, oh, no, I can't have a relationship with God. I'm too bad.

[5:12] I'm too this. I'm too that. No, He says, I want you to have a relationship with Him. In Ephesians 1, verse 13, notice what it says, in whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

You heard that Jesus Christ came to this world. He was born. He died. He was buried. He rose again. He ascended back into heaven.

And He did it all for you. He did it so you would have a way that when you die, you have a way to be alive again and go to heaven with Him. And then all it takes is us believing.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Romans chapter 10, verse 13. He says, believe that. He goes on there in Ephesians 1, 13. He says, you've heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

He says, you were sealed by the Holy Spirit. You have, as I've mentioned in weeks past, you have a down payment that has been made that you were able to have a home in heaven and the Holy Spirit is that down payment.

[6:25] And when you get past this life, if you know the Lord Jesus Christ and your Savior, He says, you have a home in heaven, promised and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

Now, as a Christian, we can't do all that on our own. We need the Lord Jesus Christ. We need the Holy Spirit. See, we cannot bear fruit of our own.

We cannot produce fruit of our own. John chapter 15, beginning at verse 1, 1 through 14, it says this, I am the true vine and my father is the husbandman.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away. And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Okay, separate different.

He's giving an example, an illustration of a tree. Or a vine. They grew grapes there and stuff. You get a vine. That vine comes out of the ground.

[7:24] That vine grows and branches come off of it. He says, the branches can't grow unless they're attached to the vine. They can't get the nourishment they need.

They can't get the water they need. They can't get the nutrients, the minerals, unless they're attached to the vine. He says, Jesus Christ is the vine. We need to be attached to him. He goes on in verse 3.

He says, now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine.

No more can ye except ye abide in me. And then in John chapter 14, verse 26, he says, but the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.

He says, you have been given the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit abides with you. The Holy Spirit is going to teach you. The Holy Spirit is going to bring things to your remembrance. Everything that I have said. If you want to understand the word of God, you have to do that through the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

[8:37] The Holy Spirit is going to help you to understand this book. I read the Bible and I just don't get anything out of it. First of all, are you saved? Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ is your Savior? Because it's His Spirit that's going to help you understand this book.

It's Him working in you that's going to help you understand what this word is saying. He says, look, you need to have the Holy Spirit in your life. We need to learn to walk with the Spirit.

Day by day, moment by moment of every day, we need to have the Holy Spirit. So, He says in this passage of Scripture, first thing, He gives a command to the believer.

He gives a command and that command is to walk. He gives a command to walk. Verse 16 there, this I say then, walk in the Spirit.

when a person is saved, you're cleansed, you're made clean, sin is washed away, you're indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and then we're to walk with Him.

[9:42] Walk's a pretty easy word to understand, isn't it? Put two feet in front of the other, but it also has some other meanings to progress, to go forward, to make use of the opportunities that have been given to you.

You move forward in things to be consistent. And I want you to notice something about the way this is worded. If you've been here any length of time, you know I always point out this one English fact.

Notice it says walk in the Spirit. Whenever you start a sentence with a verb, it's a command. It's an imperative.

He says this is a command. Walk. In the Spirit. I want you to do that because if you do that, your life will be what it's supposed to be.

He goes on and says if you do that, you're not going to fulfill the lust of the flesh. So he says walk in the Spirit. Walk with me every day. And you think about walking.

[10:49] It's something we do. We don't have to think about it. We just do it. It's a habit. I want to go from here to there. I want to get from the couch to the refrigerator and back.

I walk. He says it's a habit that we have. He says be filled with the Spirit. Know that the Spirit is in you and walk with Him day by day.

In Ephesians chapter 5 verse 18 I didn't put it up on the screen first. Most of you probably know. Be not drunk with wine when it was excess but be filled with the Spirit. We're to be filled.

Allow God to work in our life day by day. He says look submit yourself follow Him. He says to walk in the Spirit would be a matter of living for God day after day after day.

How am I going to do that? Well first of all I have to carry on a conversation with God. How do I carry on a conversation with God? I pray. That's me talking to God.

[11:58] I read God's word. That's God's talking to me. I carry on a conversation. I pray about the things that are going on in my life and I get in the word of God and I let Him speak to me. This is how you're to handle this.

This is how you're to do this. God will point things out to you through the Holy Spirit working in our life. He says walk with the Spirit and then He tells us look here's the consequences of obedience.

If you walk with the Spirit like you're supposed to what's going to happen? Look at the last part of verse 16. Ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Again the word fulfill pretty easy word.

You know what it means to perform, to execute, to complete, to bring to completion. I'm going to fulfill. And here He says you will not fulfill.

I won't bring to completion. I won't perform. I won't do the things of the flesh. The lust of the flesh. That word lust. Think about that word.

The word lust there actually means greatly desire. The things I greatly desire. See when we say lust we usually think oh yeah I know what lust is. That's when you have these bad thoughts and these different things about people and you have these sexual desires and you do yes that's part of lust.

But some people lust after power. Some people lust after prestige. Some people lust after money. Profit. There's all kinds of things we can lust after.

But He says look if you walk in the spirit you're not going to fulfill the lust of the flesh. I'm going to be what God wants me to be. I'm going to follow Him not what I want.

We were talking about fruit there for a second. At the end of this section comes verses 22 and 23. We'll talk about them next week. The fruit of the spirit. And He says look fruit doesn't grow naturally.

You understand that right? If you leave your lawn and don't do anything with it for two or three years, how many apple trees or orange trees or peach trees are going to be growing in your lawn?

[14:23] None. But you're going to have a whole bunch of weeds. See weeds grow naturally. Fruit has to be planted.

Fruit has to be cultivated. And God says you walk in the spirit and you'll not fulfill the lust of flesh. You walk in the spirit and you will see fruit.

You will not see all the weeds and things that are normally there. See the fruit of the spirit grows supernaturally. Why is that so important to us?

To have the fruit of the spirit growing in us? Why is the spirit being in control? Why is this walking in the spirit so important? because it tells about who we are.

There's a man by the name of Robert Morley and he has a quote. It should be up here. It says, other people don't create your spirit. They only reveal it. You're going through tough times.

You're going through attacks. You're going through health issues and all kinds of different things. He says, look, the spirit you have within you isn't revealed by people.

And people don't make me do this and people don't make me do that. They just reveal what you really are. Think about it. As I go through life, what do I want people to see?

I mentioned Sunday school. I saw Jesus in you. The song that we sing sometimes. I want them to see Jesus. I don't want them to see me in my natural state.

I don't want them to see me. in my lustful state. I want them to see Jesus in me. And so he says, look, walk in the spirit. Command.

Walk in the spirit. Why is that so important? Because there's a competition taking place within the believer. There's a competition within the believer.

[16:22] And it's the flesh battling the spirit. Look at verse 17. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. And these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

But if ye be led of the spirit, ye are not under the law. He says there's a battle taking place. The flesh and the spirit, they're constantly going at conflict, competition.

There's other passages in the New Testament that talk about that. God. And when we say, I'm going to surrender to the spirit of God, it's not a passage surrender.

It's not, okay, yes, I've made a decision, I think it's better to serve God, so I'm going to follow God. And that's it. No, when I make a decision to follow God, I'm going to follow God.

There's a path that God is leading us on. How often do you hear me say, looking unto Jesus, where am I heading? I'm heading toward Jesus. I have a path that I'm following. And for me to do that, I have to walk in the spirit.

[17:30] I can't just say, yep, I'm going to follow Jesus. All done. No, I have to actively follow him.

In a spirit filled life, the devil's always going to be there. As I go down this path, following Jesus, Earl is going to come over here and he's going to be, hey, Steve, Steve, Steve, Steve.

No, I'm following Jesus. David, hey, Steve, Steve, let's go do this. Nope, I'm following Jesus. See, the devil's going to throw all kinds of things at you, try to get you off track.

Oh, this looks good, doesn't it? Oh, this sounds good. Oh, did you see this? Oh, did you hear about this? Oh, there's a lot of good things in this world that sound really good, but they take us away from Jesus. He says, you're going to follow Jesus.

Romans chapter 7, verses 18 and 19 says this, For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good things.

[18:35] Stop right there for a second. If I go according to my flesh, if I do the things I want to do, if I do the things that, if I don't have the Holy Spirit guiding me, and I don't have the Holy Spirit living within me, what am I going to do?

I'm going to do whatever I want. I'm going to do anything that makes me feel good. I'm going to do anything that I think I would enjoy, and a whole lot of those things are not good for me.

You know, we think about the Holy Spirit dwelling in us as Christians. if we would actually get that concept, God's Spirit dwells in me.

What a difference that would make in our lives. Picture it this way. We have trouble picturing the Holy Spirit living within us, Jesus' Spirit living within us.

So let's picture it this way. Jesus is right here beside me, okay? If Jesus is right here beside me, is that going to affect the things that I say?

[19:45] Is that going to affect the language I use? If Jesus is right here beside me, is that going to affect the places I go, the things that I do? If Jesus is right here with me, is it going to affect how I treat people?

He says, the Holy Spirit dwells within you. Walk in the Spirit. And it will change the way you live your life. He says there in verse 18 again, Romans 7, 18, up there on the screen, it says, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing, for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.

For the good that I would do, I do not, but the evil that I would not, that I do. We've all experienced that, haven't we? Oh, I want to do this and this and this. But other things take its place.

Oh, I don't want to do that, I don't want to get involved in that, and you find yourself doing it. I'm going to have my devotions every morning at such and such a time. How many things are going to come up at that time of day that you need to take care of and do?

I'm going to spend time in prayer with God every day. How many other things come up? Or maybe you're, I'm going to fight through this, I'm going to spend time with God.

[21:04] I'm going to go to prayer with God. And while you're praying, how many other thoughts come into your mind? The devil's always there. What about this? What about that? You're forgetting this. You need to go do this. You need to take this person.

You need to call them. All kinds of things come in there, don't they? He says, walk in the spirit. Keep your focus on the spirit and what he's wanting you to do.

Or the things, the evil that I would not. I know better than to go over here. I know better than, excuse me, I know better than to do this.

Think of it. I'm a Christian, but I used to have a problem with X, Y, and Z sin. I'm a Christian. I used to have a problem with drinking.

Probably the best place for you to be is not at the bar. I used to have a problem with pornography. Well, maybe the best thing for you to do is not watch certain movies and TV shows and other things.

[22:09] See, he says, the things that I would do, I don't do. And the things I would not do, that's what I do. He says, you need to be walking in the Spirit. See, an unsaved person, that's not as much of a problem with them because they don't have the Spirit of God living in them.

But when the Spirit of God is in you, you're saved and the Spirit of God is living in you, you've got this constant battle going on. Because you still have your old sin nature, but God's in there now and he says, we need to submit to what he has for us.

sometimes the things we do will cause us regret. Sometimes the things we do have painful consequences.

We need to walk in the Spirit and let God work in our life. See, the problem with the flesh is it brings death. The flesh brings death.

He goes on in verses 19 to 21. And this is really interesting. He says, now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these? Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like.

[23:33] Stop there. You know, what's the world's answer to sin? People have issues and people have problems and people have, they wind up in jail, they wind up in getting therapy, they wind up in all kinds of things.

What is the basic thing behind it? Sin. And what's the world's answer? We get exactly the answer the world says. They need better housing.

They need better transportation. They need better education. education will fix a whole lot of, we were reading a thing this week. State of Maine, Department of Education.

There was a hearing held sometime, I don't know, it might have been a little while ago, but the head of the Maine Department of Education said that reading, writing, and math are not all that important anymore.

unless we get the social, emotional, what was the other one? Huh? Something else. Until we get those things right, reading, writing, and math don't really matter.

[24:43] So our focus, our purpose is to take care of those things. No, that's not your job. That's not what you're supposed to do.

So if we had more income coming in, if we had better medical care, all these things are good things, all these things are desirable things, but they don't fix the inner problem, which is sin.

We have a sin problem that needs to be taken care of. You know, we want to fix all the outward things, but if we don't fix the inward, the outward is just going to go back to being what it was.

It's not going to make any difference. And notice the list that he gives here. He gives a list. He says, these are the works of the flesh, and they're in three general areas, immorality, religion, and human relationships.

Immorality, notice what he says, adultery, fornication, what's that? That's permitting sexual thoughts and acts outside of marriage, anything outside of marriage.

[25:47] He says, no, that's fornication. Uncleanness, lasciviousness, lewdness, lustfulness, all of those type of things. He says, those things, have taken over.

And we look at our world today, yep, those things have taken over. Those are more important than anything else in our world right now. How can I fulfill those immoral desires that I have?

The porn industry is an \$8 billion, probably more than that now, it's an old figure that I looked at. \$8 billion thing. Back in Paul's day when he's writing this, it was an immoral world under the Roman Empire.

There actually was a word that was used, I don't know Greek and Latin and all that, but there was a word that meant to live like a Corinthian.

and that word, phrase, whatever it was, it said to live like a Corinthian meant that basically you were a drunk and had an immoral lifestyle.

[26:57] That's what they were known for. You know, a whole lot of things in this world kind of come under that category right now. I always find it interesting.

You know, one of the things, like I told you last week, I like sports. I was up late last night. Celtics were playing the Lakers. Can't miss a Celtics-Lakers game.

Just can't happen. So, I was watching. But one of the things I've noticed, you know, it used to be the beer commercials and things were part of the sports thing and you're kind of like, you want healthy bodies and things.

Why are these? Have you noticed the newest thing? I don't know how many of you watch sports, but the new thing is, there's like four or five different online betting things where you can bet on the sports games.

I'm like, sports are supposed to be pure. It's supposed to be competition. It's supposed to be, why are we betting on them? Because when you bring betting in, there's issues that are going to come up. Are they being honest?

[27:56] Are they playing the way they should? Are they, why are these a part of, why is drinking and betting a part of the sports thing? I just don't get it. Anyway, he also says, look, religious idolatry.

He says idolatry and he says, witchcraft or sorcery? He says those things where you're worshipping a false god. You're going after something that is not godly.

You're trying to trust in something to meet your needs that has no way of doing that because it's a graven image or it's an idea or a thought that you're trying to do.

He says, look, don't go for idolatry. And he says, look, don't go after witchcraft and sorcery. What do we call that today? You ever hear people talking about the fact they're involved in Wicca?

Same thing. It's the same thing. He says, people are going after these things other than God. They're putting their trust there. And then he talks about human relationships.

[29:01] Human relationships. He says, hatred, variance. What's variance? Quarrelsome. You see that in this world today? Emulations.

I'm trying to strive to imitate somebody because of jealousy. I want what they've got. I'm going to copy them so I can get what they've got. That's emulation.

Wrath. Outbursts of anger. Strife. Seditions. Sedition is having a spirit to stand apart, to create division. We have variance, quarrelsomeness, which is trying to create division.

There's a lot of division taking place. And then he says, look, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings. What's reveling? Reveling is the carousing and things that goes along with the drunkenness.

He said, all these different things are taking place. He says, and they're all leading to the wrong area. Then look at that last part of verse 21. He says, I've told you about these things in the past.

[30:04] He says, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. He said, why are they not going to inherit the kingdom of God? Because they're not saved.

They never asked Jesus Christ to come into their life. They've never trusted the fact that Jesus said, I gave my life for you. I rose from the dead. I went back to heaven.

I sit at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for you so that you can be saved, so that you can have a home in heaven, so that you can live on this world in this life and do it in the right way.

He says, I did all of that for you. All you need to do is trust me. You know, the things that we're facing today have been around for a long time.

They were back in Paul's day, there even before that. We have been facing, see, the devil has no new tricks. He keeps trying the same ones over and over again. And we keep falling for them, so why not?

Use the same ones because we keep falling for them. He says, look, you've got a command. There's a competition taking place inside you, but, Sunday school we talked about that word but, but, we have the conquest of the believers.

A third thing, conquest of the believers. Look at verse 18. He says, but ye, but if ye be led of the spirit, you're not under the law.

He says, if you're led by the spirit, you're not under the law. So, what's the answer? Yield to the spirit, walk in the spirit.

Paul contrasts the things here. He says, look, the spirit of God can save you. The spirit of God can lead you. The spirit of God can take you down the path that's where God wants you to be.

He says, the law doesn't do that. The law can't save you. The law can't give you righteousness. All the law does, we learned back in chapter 3 with the schoolmaster, it shows me that I'm doing right and wrong. Here's the law.

[32:20] Are you doing it or right or wrong? It can't save me, it just tells me what I'm doing. But he says, Jesus came to save you. Jesus came to give you new life.

Romans chapter 8 verses 12 and 13. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.

But if ye live through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. He says, you follow the spirit, you mortify the deeds of the body, you get rid of those lustful things, you walk as God wants you to walk.

He says, and ye shall live. So what's the answer? Don't feed the flesh. Don't feed the flesh. Romans chapter 13 verse 14. put on.

Put on. I have this coat this morning. I walked in and I put on my coat. He says, put on the Lord Jesus Christ. But better than a coat, I like to think of it this way.

[33:33] Ephesians chapter 6 talks about putting on the whole armor of God. The rest of righteousness, helmet of salvation, sword of the spirit, all those different things.

He says, look, put on the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be able to stand fast. You'll be armored, ready. He says, put on the Lord Jesus Christ.

You'll be able to stay on the right path and go forward with God's people. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. You'll be able to walk in the spirit. Put on Jesus Christ.

Why is that so important? He said, don't make provisions for the flesh. Put on Jesus. In Matthew chapter 6, it's the Lord's prayer.

You all know the Lord's prayer? Oh, I forgot it. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. In that prayer, it says, in verse 13 of Matthew 6, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

[34:37] How do we do that? Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. How do we do that? We walk in the spirit. He says, don't lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. And he will do that.

And then it says, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. Did you notice that? Don't lead us into temptation, deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom.

Remember the last of verse 21, that list of all those sins, what did he say? Those that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

He says, you put on the spirit, you follow God, he will help you to resist temptation, not to be led into temptation, he will help deliver you from evil, and thine is the kingdom.

You want to be part of the kingdom of God, follow him, walk in his spirit. The most effective way for us to fight against sin, the most effective way for us to go against the things of the flesh, starve him to death.

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and do not make provision for the flesh. So, let's wrap this up. Walking in the spirit is an essential part of Christian life.

We have to walk with Jesus day by day, because when he's right there beside us and he's walking with us, or even better yet, when he's walking, he's living inside us, it makes a difference in how we live our lives.

If I'm concentrating on the fact that God is living within me, I am not going to do a whole lot of things. I am not going to say a whole lot of things. See, we need to allow the Holy Spirit to lead us to do the right things.

I have an annual checkup coming up here in a week. Those annual checkups, sometimes the doctors will say, look, I want you to have this test and this test and this test done so I can check some things before you come to the thing.

Why do they do that? They're trying to do an early detection. I know some of you are thinking because they want more money. No, they're doing supposedly for early detection. to find out if I've got something going on that needs to be taken care of.

[36:58] See, we need to go to the Holy Spirit and as we go to the Holy Spirit, we need to ask him, Lord, is there something in my life? You know, we have communion.

We say, man's going to examine himself. He wants us to examine ourselves regularly. Lord, am I living the way you want me to? Lord, am I doing the things you have for me?

Lord, do a checkup on me. Do an early detection before I go too far and go in the wrong way. Lord, do a checkup on me. We need to walk in the Spirit moment by moment, day by day.

This morning, I want us to end with a hymn. Take your hymn book and turn to page 353.