

BREAKING THROUGH TO

SPIRITUAL
MATURITY

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GOAL OF OUR STUDY:

Overcoming the Personal and Spiritual Strongholds that can Keep You from Experiencing True Freedom in Christ.

Introduction

We all mature physically whether we want to or not. On the other hand, spiritual maturity is not guaranteed. While you are most likely to encounter the term “**spiritual maturity**” within the Christian context, the principles of spiritual maturity can be found in all religious and wisdom traditions.

Too often many go through life without examining their beliefs, values, and assumptions that guide our actions. The **spiritually immature** live their lives without being aware of the underlying spiritual forces influencing them.

The spiritually mature consciously and carefully chooses to develop life habits consistent with the Word of God in values as: Love, Compassion, Empathy, Selfless giving, and the list goes on and on. They try to avoid all things that promote negative values. Through the indwelling of the Holy Spirits, they seek to live out these values in all areas of life.

Our life is not a self-improvement project based on our own skills and strength. Our life is a transformational process based on Grace, Surrendering, and Trust. This is done by growing in spiritual maturity; God is at work building Christ-like character in us.

Spiritual life has often been compared to walking upstream. If you are not progressing forward, then you are going backwards. The waves of the world are too powerful; the ungodly TV shows, the ungodly music, the depraved culture of this world is always seeking to push a believer backwards. Therefore, we must always seek to progress in our spiritual lives; otherwise, we will be spiritually declining.

God’s will is for every person to experience growth and maturity as a follower of Christ. Maturity is not based on age, appearance, achievements or academics. Maturity is determined by attitude. It is our attitude that impacts our character. Without a commitment to spiritual maturity in relationships, we cannot truly fulfill Christ’s command that we love our neighbor as ourselves.

"We will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ" ([Ephes. 4:15](#)); "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free" ([Galatians 5:1](#)). It is every believer's personal responsibility to pursue spiritual maturity and claim freedom in Christ.

Grow Strong and Be Free

Ephesians 4:11-13 (KJV) “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:”

* Believers must seek to know God and walk in right relationship with Him.

Spiritual maturity is not an option. Mature believers, fit for ministry to each other and the world, are the result of God's design for the church. Maturity is the reason God grouped us in the local church and have provided spiritual leaders to Teach us, Guide us and **Discipline** us. If we do not pursue maturity, we are not cooperating with God's design for us.

John 1:11-12 (KJV) “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:”

*Believers must grasp their true identity in Jesus Christ.

We cannot mature as believers if we are not growing in our knowledge of God. This is why the following is necessary if we are going to grow in Spiritual maturity. Bible study; Sunday school; Worship, Workshops, Meditation in Prayer are all positive steps toward knowing God better and Spiritual maturity.

* **Why do we so often fail to live up to our noble identity as God's children?** ANSWER!! Because we fail to properly understand our true identity in Christ.

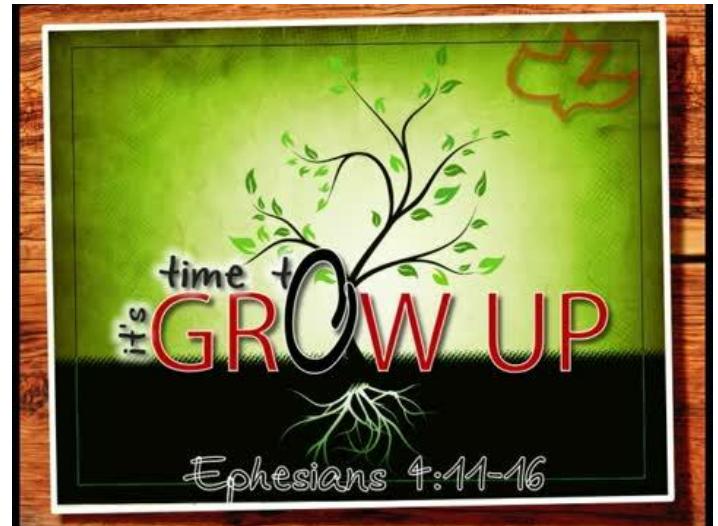
"[Satan] knows that if he can keep us from knowing who we are and whose we are." The fact is that we have an enemy who is dead set against us understanding who we are in Christ. Satan is behind the confusion that keeps us from walking as mature, free children of God.

* Believers must acknowledge the reality of Satan, his kingdom and his design to deceive and destroy the people of God.

Ephesians 6:11-12 (KJV) “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

As believers in Jesus Christ we are to be God-centered and ministry-centered, not demon-centered. As Christians, we are not to be spiritual "ghostbusters" who go looking for Satan and his demons behind every door.

Rather, while living for Christ daily, we need a scripturally balanced awareness of the reality of Satan's relentless opposition to our maturity and freedom. And we need a biblical understanding of our protection and authority for resisting Satan and claiming the freedom Christ has provided.



* Believers must recognize that spiritual maturity is a lifetime process but spiritual freedom can be obtained in a relatively short time.

2 Peter 1:3 (KJV) “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.”

Maturity is a process of growth that continues throughout our lives as we apply ourselves to knowing God and His Word. We may have been a Christian for 4 days or 40 years, but we are still maturing. Freedom, however, is a position we take in response to Christ's victory over sin and Satan.

You are either free or bound in various areas of your life. You don't grow into freedom in these areas; you take possession of it by the authority of Christ wherever you realize you have been deceived and bound by Satan and bitterness.

Spiritual maturity and freedom are interdependent upon each other. If we do not pursue spiritual maturity, we will have difficulty recognizing Satan's deception and claiming spiritual freedom. Similarly, if we refuse to lay hold of our freedom in some areas of our lives, our spiritual growth and maturity will be hindered.

* Every believer must assume personal responsibility for his/her own spiritual maturity and freedom.

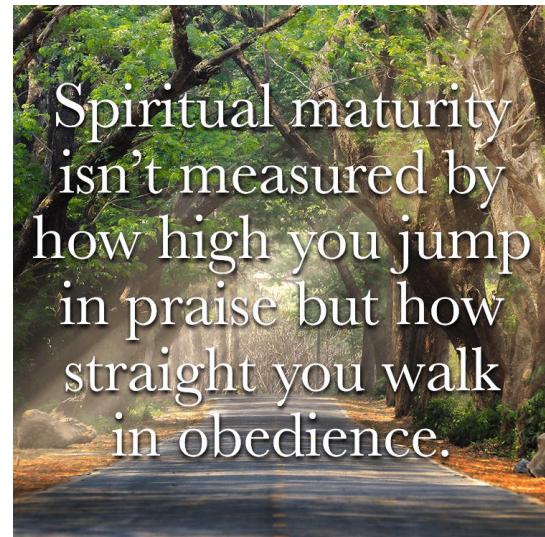
Philippians 3:13-14 (KJV) “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

Galatians 5:1 (KJV) “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

* In what ways do Christians sometimes try to "pass the buck" of responsibility for their spiritual lives?

Examples: Some may say: “I come from a non-Christian background, so it's difficult for me to change my life-style”; “My spouse is not a good Christian influence”; “I don't understand the Bible, so I don't read it”; “I'm uncomfortable in Bible study groups, so I don't go”; “I'm not as bad as other Christians I know”.

Real answer: No matter how difficult it may seem for us to pursue maturity and claim freedom, no one can do it for us. No matter how many obstacles we find in our past, our relationships or our present situation, we cannot blame these difficulties for our lack of growth or freedom.



Five Keys to Spiritual Maturity and Freedom

1. Believers must seek to know God and walk in right relationship with Him.

If we really know God, our behavior will change thoroughly and instantly. That is what scripture teaches us will happen.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV) “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*”

Philippians 2:5 (KJV) “*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*”

2. Believers must grasp their true identity in Jesus Christ.

God created humans to have unique characteristics and purpose. However, he designed us also to have a commonality of contentment with our lives through His will.

Ephesians 1:5 (KJV) “*Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*”

1 Corinthians 6:17 (KJV) “*But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.*”

Romans 6:6 (KJV) “*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*”

3. Believers must acknowledge the reality of Satan, his kingdom and his design to deceive and destroy the people of God.

Satan is opposed to our maturity and will do anything he can to keep us from realizing who we are and what we have in Christ.

But don't be fooled because Satan would have you accept that he is nothing more than a costume or a cartoon character.

Genesis 3:1 (KJV) “*Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*”

Isaiah 14:12 (KJV) “*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!*”

Hebrews 2:14 (KJV) “*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;*”

Matthew 4:1 (KJV) “*Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.*”

4. Believers must recognize that spiritual maturity is a lifetime process, but spiritual freedom can be obtained in a relatively short time.

We have failed to make a distinction between freedom and maturity in Christian living. There is no instant maturity; it's a process. But people can be set free instantly.

2 Peter 1:3 (KJV) “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:”

James 4:7 (KJV) “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

1 John 4:4 (KJV) “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

5. Every believer must assume personal responsibility for his/her own spiritual maturity and freedom.

Ultimately every Christian is responsible for his or her own maturity and freedom in Christ. Nobody can make you grow. That's your decision and daily responsibility. Nobody can solve your problems.

When we become Christians, we enter a relationship with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit that will cause us to grow. With the power of the Holy Spirit, we are called to become more like Jesus and to become more holy. It is this spiritual growth that becomes a birthmark of our faith!

1 Samuel 2:26 (KJV) “And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.”

2 Peter 3:18 (KJV) “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.”

Hebrews 6:1 (KJV) “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,”

Hebrews 6:1 (NIV) Bonus point to better understand this verse “Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God,”

It's Who You Are That Counts!!!

We derive our identity from our eternal relationship with Jesus Christ. In Christ we are **SAINTS**, totally accepted children of God. In order to understand who, we really are in Christ, we need first to understand the identity we inherited from Adam at Creation.

Genesis 2:7 (KJV) “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

That man was Adam, and since we are related to him, we have inherited some of his characteristics.

Our Positive Inheritance from Creation:

As a result of our relationship to the first Adam, we have an outer self, a physical body which relates to the world through the five senses, (Humans have **five basic senses**: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch) and an inner self which is created in the image of God.

Somewhere in the inner self we find our mind (allowing us to think), our emotions (allowing us to feel) and our will (allowing us to choose). Some refer to this three-level section as the soul.

Genesis 1:26-27 (KJV) “*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”*

Genesis 2:7 (KJV) “*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”*

Adam enjoyed several benefits from Creation, and we have inherited these benefits from him or from Jesus Christ who restored them to us after Adam forfeited them through sin.

Physical life describes the union of the physical body and immaterial self—mind, emotions and will. To die physically means separation from the temporal body.

We inherited physical life and death from Adam. But our identity in Christ must be something more than physical life and attributes, because the body is left behind at death when the true self goes to be with the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:8 (KJV) “*We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”*

Spiritual life: In the New Testament the soul/spirit makes up our spiritual life: the soul/spirit is in union with God. Adam was created both physically and spiritually alive. We also inherited from Adam the capacity for spiritual life.

2 Corinthians 4:16 (KJV) “*For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.”*

To be spiritually alive is to be in union with God by being in Christ. Like Adam, we were created to be in union with God. And like Adam, our union with God was disengaged at the Fall.

Adam was given rule over all other creatures ([Genesis 1:26, 27](#)). He enjoyed dominion in the garden under God until Satan took over his dominion through deception and became the god of this world. As Christians, the significant dominion Adam exercised before the Fall has been restored to us in Christ. It's part of our identity.

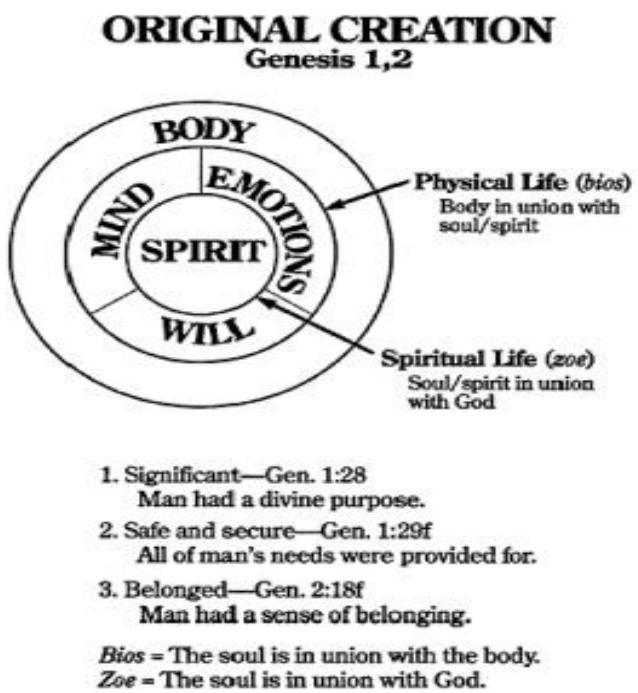


Genesis 1: 26-27 KJV

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Overcoming the Personal and Spiritual Strongholds that can Keep us from Experiencing True Freedom in Christ.



The reason so many Christians are not enjoying the maturity and freedom which is their inheritance in Christ is because they hold wrong self-perceptions. They don't see themselves as they really are in Christ. They don't understand the dramatic change which occurred in them the moment they trusted in Him.

They don't see themselves the way God sees them, and to that degree they suffer from a poor self-image. They don't grasp their true identity. They identify themselves with the wrong Adam.

Too many Christians identify only with the first Adam, whose sad story of failure we have read over and over in the bible. We see ourselves camped longingly outside the garden of Eden with Adam and Eve, as part of their family. We know we have blown it and forfeited paradise forever. And we can't seem to keep ourselves from repeating Adam's failure every day of our lives.

Yes, you and I inherited physical life from Adam. But if you are a Christian, that is where the similarity ends. You are now identified with the last Adam, Jesus Christ. You are not locked outside God's presence as Adam was. You are seated with Christ in the heaven.

Ephesians 2:6 (KJV) “And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

The difference between the two Adams in our history is eternally profound. You need to be sure you're identifying with the right Adam.

New Life Requires New Birth:

John 3:3 (KJV) “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

John 3:36 (KJV) “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

New Life Brings New Identity:

Ephesians 2:10 (KJV) “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

1 Peter 2:9 (KJV) “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:”

1 Peter 2:10 (KJV) “Which in time past were not a people but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”

1 John 3:1-2 (KJV) “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore, the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

2 Corinthians 5:17 (KJV) “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

New Life Results in a New Title:

1 Corinthians 1:2 (KJV) “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:”

Notice:

SAINTS not Sinners SAVED BY GRACE! However, we were SAVED BY: God RICHES AT CHRIST EXPENSE!!



Who Am I?

One of the best ways to grow and mature as a believer is to continually remind yourself who you are and what you possess as a child of God. The more you affirm who you are in Christ, the more your behavior will reflect your true identity.

1. I am the salt of the earth ([Matthew 5:13](#)).
2. I am the light of the world ([Matthew 5:14](#)).
3. I am a child of God ([John 1:12](#)).
4. I am Christ's friend ([John 15:15](#)).
5. I am a slave of righteousness ([Romans 6:18](#)).
6. I am a joint heir with Christ, sharing His inheritance with Him ([Romans 8:17](#)).
7. I am a temple—a dwelling place—of God. His Spirit and His life dwells in me ([1 Cor. 3:16](#); [1 Cor. 6:19](#)).
8. I am a member of Christ's Body ([1 Cor. 12:27](#); [Ephes. 5:30](#)).
9. I am a new creation ([2 Cor. 5:17](#)).
10. I am reconciled to God and am a minister of reconciliation ([2 Cor. 5:18, 19](#)).
11. I am a saint ([Ephes. 1:1](#); [1 Cor. 1:2](#); [Phil. 1:1](#); [Col. 1:2](#)).
12. I am God's workmanship—His handiwork—born anew in Christ to do His work ([Ephes. 2:10](#)).
13. I am a fellow citizen with the rest of God's family ([Ephes. 2:19](#)).
14. I am a prisoner of Christ ([Ephes. 3:1](#); [Ephes. 4:1](#)).
15. I am righteous and holy ([Ephes. 4:24](#)).
16. I am a citizen of heaven, seated in heaven right now ([Phil. 3:20](#); [Ephes. 2:6](#)).
17. I am hidden with Christ in God ([Col. 3:3](#)).
18. I am chosen of God, holy and dearly loved ([Col. 3:12](#); [1 Thes. 1:4](#)).
19. I am a partaker of Christ; I share in His life ([Hebrews 3:14](#)).
20. I am one of God's living stones, being built up in Christ as a spiritual house ([1 Peter 2:5](#)).
21. I am a member of a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession ([1 Peter 2:9, 10](#)).
22. I am an alien and stranger to this world in which I temporarily live ([1 Peter 2:11](#)).
23. I am an enemy of the devil ([1 Peter 5:8](#)).
24. I am born of God, and the evil one—the devil—cannot touch me ([1 John 5:18](#)).

Since I am in Christ, by the grace of God...

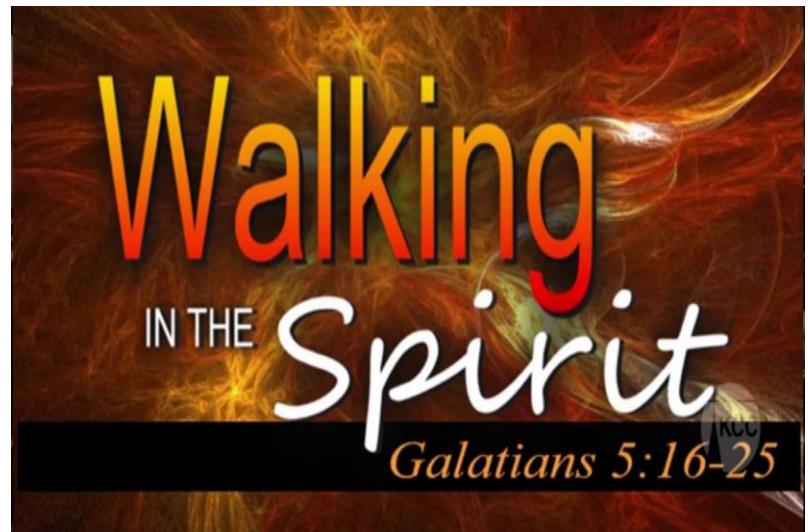
1. I have been justified—completely forgiven and made righteous ([Romans 5:1](#)).
2. I died with Christ and died to the power of sin's rule over my life ([Romans 6:1-6](#)).
3. I am free forever from condemnation ([Romans 8:1](#)).
4. I have received the Spirit of God into my life that I might know the things freely given to me by God ([1 Cor. 2:12](#)).
5. I have been given the mind of Christ ([1 Cor. 2:16](#)).
6. I have been bought with a price; I am not my own; I belong to God ([1 Cor. 6:19, 20](#)).
7. Since I have died, I no longer live for myself, but for Christ ([2 Cor. 5:14, 15](#)).
8. I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. The life I am now living is Christ's life ([Galatians 2:20](#)).
9. I have been blessed with every spiritual blessing ([Ephes. 1:3](#)).
10. I was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and am without blame before Him ([Ephes. 1:4](#)).
11. I was predestined—determined by God—to be adopted as God's son ([Ephes. 1:5](#)).
12. I have been redeemed and forgiven, and I am a recipient of His lavish grace.

13. I have been raised up and seated with Christ in heaven ([Ephes. 2:6](#)).
14. I have direct access to God through the Spirit ([Ephes. 2:18](#)).
15. I may approach God with boldness, freedom and confidence ([Ephes. 3:12](#)).
16. I have been rescued from the domain of Satan's rule and transferred to the kingdom of Christ ([Col. 1:13](#)).
17. I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins. The debt against me has been cancelled ([Col. 1:14](#)).
18. Christ Himself is in me ([Col. 1:27](#)).
19. I have been made complete in Christ ([Col. 2:10](#)).
20. I have been buried, raised and made alive with Christ ([Col. 2:12, 13](#)).
21. I died with Christ and I have been raised up with Christ. My life is now hidden with Christ in God. Christ is now my life ([Col. 3:1-4](#)).
22. I have been given a spirit of power, love and self-discipline ([2 Tim. 1:7](#)).
23. I have been saved and set apart according to God's doing ([2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5](#)).
24. I have the right to come boldly before the throne of God to find mercy and grace in time of need ([Hebrews 4:16](#)).
25. I have been given exceedingly great and precious promises by God by which I am a partaker of God's divine nature ([2 Peter 1:4](#)).

Let the Spirit Move You

"Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh" ([Galatians 5:16](#),). In Christ we have a new nature that is free to walk according to the Spirit instead of the flesh.

If you believe that you are part light and part darkness, part saint and part sinner, you will live in a very average manner with little to distinguish you from the non-Christian. You may confess your proneness to sin and strive to do better, but you will live a continually defeated life because you perceive yourself to be only a sinner saved by grace who is hanging on until the rapture.



Satan knows he can do nothing about who you really are, but if he can get you to believe you are no different from the natural person, then you will behave no differently from the natural person.

What the Spirit-filled Walk Is Not:

Walking according to the Spirit is not license: an excessive or undisciplined freedom constituting in an abuse of privilege.

Where do we get the idea that Christianity means we are free to "do our own thing"? We must understand that we sometimes tend to confuse liberty with license!!

Romans 6:1-2 (KJV) “*What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*”

Galatians 5:1 (KJV) “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

Being led by the Spirit doesn't mean you are free to do anything you want to do. It means you are finally free to live a responsible, moral life—something you were incapable of doing when you were the prisoner of your flesh. . . . God's laws, from which we seek to be free, are not restrictive, but protective.

Our real freedom is your ability to choose to live responsibly within the context of the protective guidelines God has established for our lives. Walking according to the Spirit is not legalism, but the opposite extreme from license.

In what ways do Christians sometimes seek to develop spirituality by enforcing Christian behavior?

Rules and Regulations of Christian behavior does not enable the Spirit-filled walk; it often kills it!!

Romans 7:5 (KJV) “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.”

2 Corinthians 3:6 (KJV) “Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”

Galatians 3:13 (KJV) “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:”

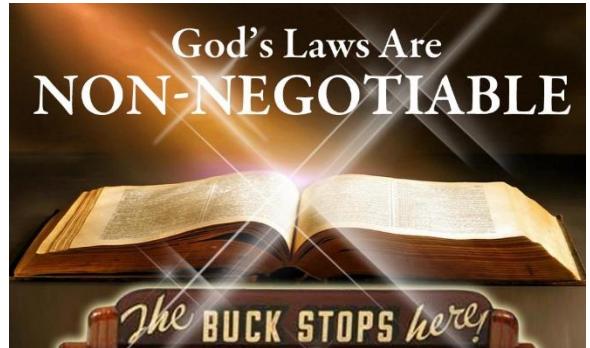
Galatians 3:21 (KJV) “Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.”

Galatians 5:18 (KJV) “But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.”

Christians have been notorious at trying to legislate spirituality with don'ts: Christians don't drink, don't smoke, don't dance, don't attend movies, don't play cards, don't wear makeup, etc. But legalism can't curb immorality.

In fact, laying down the law merely serves to heighten the temptation. . . . Neither will a Spirit-filled heart be produced by demanding that someone conform to a religious code of behavior. We often equate Christian disciplines such as Bible study, prayer, regular church attendance and witnessing with spiritual maturity. All these activities are good and helpful for spiritual growth. But merely performing these admirable Christian exercises does not guarantee a Spirit-filled walk.

Does this mean that rules for behavior in the Bible are bad? Of course not. God's law is a necessary protective moral standard and guideline. Within the confines of God's law we are free to nurture a spirit-to-Spirit relationship with God, which is the essence of walking in the Spirit.



What the Spirit-filled Walk Is

1. The Spirit-filled walk means walking in liberty. Paul wrote that we are "competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. . . . Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom".
2. In Christ we are free moral agents. We are no longer compelled to walk according to the flesh. We are not even compelled to walk according to the Spirit. We are completely free to choose to walk according to the Spirit or the flesh.
3. The Spirit-filled walk implies *walking* not *sitting*.

* **In what ways are Christians tempted to sit back and wait for God to do what we are supposed to do?**

We must understand the scriptural guidelines for faith *and* actions in the Christian life.

James 2:14-18 (KJV) "*What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.*"

One of the most dangerous and harmful detriments to your spiritual growth is passively putting your mind in neutral and coasting; Sitting back and waiting for God to do everything is not God's way to spiritual maturity.

* **In what ways are Christians tempted to run ahead of God?**

Psalm 5:3 (KJV) "*My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.*"

Psalm 27:14 (KJV) "*Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.*"

Psalm 37:7 (KJV) "*Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.*"

Remember: Jesus invites you and I to a restful walk in tandem with Him, just as two oxen walk together under the same yoke. "How can a yoke be restful?" Because Jesus' yoke is an easy yoke.

Jesus walks at a steady pace. If you pace yourself with Him, your burden will be easy. But if you take a passive approach to the relationship, you'll be painfully dragged along in the yoke because Jesus keeps walking.

THE NATURAL PERSON

Life "In the Flesh"

1 Corinthians 2:14

FLESH (Rom. 8:8)

Though flesh can mean the body, it is the learned independence which gives sin its opportunity. The natural man who tries to find purpose and meaning in life independent of God is going to struggle with inferiority, insecurity, inadequacy, guilt, worry, and doubts.

BODY

Tension or migraine headaches, nervous stomach, hives, skin rashes, allergies, asthma, some arthritis, spastic colon, heart palpitations, respiratory ailments, etc.

BODY

FLESH

MIND

EMOTIONS

SPIRIT

WILL

BODY

FLESH

MIND

EMOTIONS

SPIRIT

WILL

WILL

(Gal. 5:16-18)

walk after the flesh

immorality

impurity

sensuality

idolatry

sorcery

enmities

strife

outhursts of anger

WILL

(Gal. 5:16-18)

walk after the flesh

immorality

jealousy

disputes

dissensions

factions

envying

drunkenness

carousing

SPIRIT

(Gal. 5:16-18)

walk after the flesh

love

joy

peace

patience

kindness

goodness

faithfulness

gentleness

self-control

THE SPIRITUAL PERSON

Life "In the Spirit"

FLESH (Rom. 8:8)

The crucifying of the flesh is the believer's responsibility, on a day-by-day basis as he considers himself dead to sin.

BODY

Temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19, 20) Present as a living and holy sacrifice (Rom. 12:1)

FLESH

MIND

EMOTIONS

SPIRIT

WILL

BODY

Temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19, 20) Present as a living and holy sacrifice (Rom. 12:1)

FLESH

MIND

EMOTIONS

SPIRIT

WILL

THE FLESHLY PERSON

Life "According to the Flesh"

1 Corinthians 3:3

FLESH (Rom. 8:8)

The ingrained habit patterns still appeal to the mind to live independent of God.

BODY

Tension or migraine headaches, nervous stomach, hives, skin rashes, allergies, asthma, some arthritis, spastic colon, heart palpitations, respiratory ailments, etc.

BODY

FLESH

MIND

EMOTIONS

SPIRIT

WILL

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Notice: Every child of God is *in* Christ and every non-Christian is *in* the flesh. Since the flesh remains after salvation, we can choose to walk according to the flesh or according to the Spirit, but we are no longer in the flesh.

Spiritual Evaluation (Homework)

Answer this exercise which will help you evaluate your progress in the Spirit-filled walk.

1. The Spirit-filled walk began for me _____ (date or period of life) when I was justified by placing my faith in Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord.
2. The scriptural truth that I am no longer "in the flesh," but "in Christ" and that I am no longer darkness, but light in the Lord, is:
 - a. something I never considered because I always assumed that I was part evil and part good.
 - b. something I have wondered about but never understood.
 - c. something I felt was true but couldn't find in Scripture.
 - d. something that gives me hope.
 - e. your own response: _____
3. Since I have become a Christian, my progress toward the ideal spiritual person described in this Bible Study could be rated (circle a number between 0 and 10):

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No progress						Steady progress				
4. The area of my life where I experience the greatest difficulty walking according to the Spirit consistently is (circle one):
 - a. thought life
 - b. family
 - c. job
 - d. friendships
 - e. church
 - f. neighborhood
 - g. other (describe). _____
5. The parameter of the Spirit-filled walk from this Bible Study I most need to apply to my life is:

Twenty Cans of Success

1. Why should I say I can't when the Bible says I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength ([Phil. 4:13](#))?
2. Why should I lack when I know that God shall supply all my needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus ([Phil. 4:19](#))?
3. Why should I fear when the Bible says God has not given me a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind ([2 Tim. 1:7](#)).
4. Why should I lack faith to fulfill my calling knowing that God has allotted to me a measure of faith ([Romans 12:3](#))?
5. Why should I be weak when the Bible says that the Lord is the strength of my life and that I will display strength and take action because I know God ([Psalm 27:1](#); [Daniel 11:32](#))?

6. Why should I allow Satan supremacy over my life when He that is in me is greater than he that is in the world ([1 John 4:4](#))?
7. Why should I accept defeat when the Bible says that God always leads me in triumph ([2 Cor. 2:14](#))?
8. Why should I lack wisdom when Christ became wisdom to me from God and God gives wisdom to me generously when I ask Him for it ([1 Cor. 1:30](#); [James 1:5](#))?
9. Why should I be depressed when I can recall to mind God's lovingkindness, compassion and faithfulness and have hope ([Lament. 3:21-23](#))?
10. Why should I worry and fret when I can cast all my anxiety on Christ who cares for me ([1 Peter 5:7](#))?
11. Why should I ever be in bondage knowing that there is liberty where the Spirit of the Lord is ([2 Cor. 3:17](#); [Galatians 5:1](#))?
12. Why should I feel condemned when the Bible says I am not condemned because I am in Christ ([Romans 8:1](#))?
13. Why should I feel alone when Jesus said He is with me always and He will never leave me nor forsake me ([Matthew 28:20](#); [Hebrews 13:5](#))?
14. Why should I feel accursed or that I am the victim of bad luck when the Bible says that Christ redeemed me from the curse of the law that I might receive His Spirit ([Galatians 3:13, 14](#))?
15. Why should I be discontented when I, like Paul, can learn to be content in all my circumstances ([Phil. 4:11](#))?
16. Why should I feel worthless when Christ became sin on my behalf that I might become the righteousness of God in Him ([2 Cor. 5:21](#))?
17. Why should I have a persecution complex knowing that nobody can be against me when God is for me ([Romans 8:31](#))?
18. Why should I be confused when God is the author of peace and He gives me knowledge through His indwelling Spirit ([1 Cor. 14:33](#); [1 Cor. 2:12](#))?
19. Why should I feel like a failure when I am a conqueror in all things through Christ ([Romans 8:37](#))?
20. Why should I let the pressures of life bother me when I can take courage knowing that Jesus has overcome the world and its tribulations ([John 16:33](#))?

Saints Who Lost Control

1. The woman crippled for 18 years ([Luke 13:10-18](#)).
2. The apostle Peter ([Luke 22:31-34](#)).
3. Believers in need of spiritual armor ([Ephes. 6:10-17](#)).

4. Believers entertaining jealousy and selfish ambition ([James 3:14-16](#)).
5. Believers swayed by deceiving spirits and demonic doctrines ([1 Tim. 4:1-3](#)).
6. The man involved in immorality with his father's wife ([1 Cor. 5:1-13](#)).
7. Believers who entertain anger ([Ephes. 4:26, 27](#)) or unforgiveness ([2 Cor. 2:10, 11](#)).
8. Believers in need of guarding against being devoured by Satan ([1 Peter 5:6-9](#)).
9. Ananias and Sapphira ([Acts 5:1-11](#)).

Resisting Control

Anything bad which you cannot stop doing, or anything good which you cannot make yourself do, could be an area of control.

1. Make no provision for the flesh ([Romans 13:14](#)).
2. Resist the devil ([James 4:7](#)).
3. Put on the spiritual armor ([Ephes. 6:10-17](#)).
4. Don't let sin reign ([Romans 6:12](#)).

Channels of Temptation

1. The lust of the flesh: preys on our physical appetites and their gratification in this world.
2. The lust of the eyes: appeals to self-interest and tests God and His Word.
3. The pride of life: stresses self-promotion and self-exaltation.

The Way of Escape

1. Capture ([2 Cor. 10:5](#))
2. Evaluate ([Phil. 4:8](#))
3. Confess ([1 John 1:9](#))
4. Resist ([James 4:7](#))

Understanding Our Enemy

1. We live in a world that is under the authority of Satan ([John 12:31](#); [John 14:30](#); [John 16:11](#); [1 John 5:19](#)).
2. Satan is no longer our ruler; Christ is our ruler ([Ephes. 1:19-23](#); [Phil. 3:20](#); [Col. 1:13](#)).

3. Satan keeps trying to rule our lives by deceiving us into believing that we still belong to him ([1 Peter 5:8](#)).
4. Our identity in Christ is eternally secure, but we can be controlled by Satan if we remain under his influence long enough ([Galatians 5:1](#); [2 Tim. 2:25, 26](#)).
5. Satan carries on his worldwide ministry of evil and deception through a hierarchy of spiritual forces—demons, evil spirits, fallen angels, etc. ([Ephes. 6:12](#))
6. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind ([Romans 12:2](#); [Col. 3:15, 16](#)).
7. Prepare your mind for action ([1 Peter 1:13](#)).
8. Take every thought captive in obedience to Christ ([2 Cor. 10:5](#)).
9. Turn to God in prayer ([Phil. 4:6, 7](#)).

In closing this bible study, my prayer is that we have gotten some tools to help us grow in Spiritual Maturity. As Christians, we are God's children created in His image to be all that He has created us to be. From this study, we should be able to identify the attacks of the enemy and prepare to stand in the midst of trials and tribulations.

Notes:
