

You Have Crawled Long Enough

*Plugged into the Source:
living in the power of the Spirit*

July 24 & 25, 2010

Intro: This weekend Salem is hosting a huge 3 on 3 basketball tournament. It's really crowded downtown; they are expecting over 30,000 spectators to watch over 700 teams play. The divisions are broken down by age, gender, ability level and even height. They've got divisions for boys and girls of all ages, men and women, families, men under 6', you name it. I looked for the over 50, over 6', has-beens, but they weren't playing. They were all telling stories about how good they used to be, hanging out at the yakisoba noodle booth.

I went to watch my son, but even if you don't know the players it is interesting to watch talent. When you see someone who seems fluid and natural, you have to wonder: *Is it all about training? Is the ability a result of discipline?* It seems like some people are *driven from within*. It doesn't look like they are *trying to remember and follow rules* about *how to dribble, move and shoot*. They find openings and get to the rim *as if they are dancing*. It seems like they've just *got it*. Whatever *it is* they've got, I know two things for sure: *I don't have it and I wish I did*.

Maybe you observe how some Christians live the Christian life and it doesn't seem like they are struggling as much as you do. It's not that their circumstances are easy, but their lives seem to be empowered from within. They don't appear to be trying to follow a bunch of rules. They look like they are free-flowing, supernaturally empowered.

When I see that, I want it. I think you do too.

Last week we introduced this new series of messages by concentrating on the power of the Spirit. I said *the Holy Spirit is God's personal answer to our need for power to live the*

Christian life. This means we don't have to *act* Christian anymore. It doesn't have to be a pretend performance. Maybe you left that message convinced, but not sure how the rubber hits the road.

You want the Spirit's power to equip you to live the Christian life. You'd like to be successful, and not just make progress at a slow painful crawl, you want to get up and get going. You'd like the confidence that you will arrive where you want to go. What we *all* need is to *walk by the Spirit!*

The NASB gives a literal translation of Gal. 5:16 - *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh*. The NIV interprets the meaning of the term with the translation *live by the Spirit*. It is an imperative, meaning it is a command. Obeying involves *a choice*. *You decide* if you want to live this way. And it is in a form that conveys continuous activity. The idea is *keep on walking*.
Message: *Live freely, animated and motivated by God's Spirit. Then you won't feed the compulsions of selfishness.*

Living Bible: *Obey only the Holy Spirit's instructions, he will tell you where to go and what to do and then you won't always be doing the wrong things your evil nature wants you to do.*

This verse provides contrast with the failure and bondage described in the previous verses. It presents walking by the Spirit as the answer to these things. When we continuously depend on the Spirit, we will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. We don't need to be dominated by sin; we can overcome and conquer.

17 explains why we need this kind of power: *For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.* (Rom 7 elaborates on this). Christians have two natures. The one we inherited and the new one we

received. They are at war. What the old nature produces is plain to see. **19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious.** An ugly list of self-destructive actions follows which is contrasted by the fruit of the Spirit in **22,23**. We'll study that next week.

1. What does it mean to *walk by the Spirit*?

• **Walking is how you get to where you want to go.**

Walking has always been the most basic means of transportation. It is how you move forward. Figuratively, your walk is your manner of living. The Scriptures mention walking worthy of the Lord (Eph 4:1; Col 1:10). 1 John 2:6 - **Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.** This is serious. Eph 5:15 - **Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise.**

• **Walking by something means you are dependent upon it.** In 2 Cor 10:2,3 we read of walking according to flesh, *by the standards of this world*. 2 Cor 5:7 talks about *walking by sight* and contrasts it with *walking by faith*. Walking by sight would be walking *by means of... relying upon... according to sight*. Walking by sight means making decisions on where to go based on what you see. Whereas walking by faith is based on what you believe.

• **Walking by the Spirit means to make progress by relying on God's indwelling presence.** You're going to get where you need to go *by means of* the Holy Spirit.

We all rely on something as our source of strength and direction in life. Let me illustrate with a clip from the original *Star Wars*. This will get you thinking about achieving what needs to be done by *an inner supernatural power*.

Luke Skywalker is the last hope to destroy the death star. Success will require more than his courage and skillful hand eye coordination. **START CLIP HERE.**

Okay, let's contrast and compare.

Points of similarity: Luke has to make a choice about where to place his trust. He decides to rely on *supernatural strength within (context of Gal)*. And when we do the same, it won't make any sense to those who don't get it. Note also the promise: the source of strength *will be with you always*.

Points of contrast: The force in Star Wars is impersonal; it is a force, not a person. And it is only available to a select few. That is not true of the Holy Spirit. If you're in one of our growth groups, you can discuss this further.

2. How can we *walk by the Spirit*? Simple as ABCD.

• **Accept Jesus Christ as Savior. Rom 8:9** - if you receive the Son, you get the Spirit. *Explain gospel here.*

• **Believe that the Spirit indwells you. Gal 4:6 God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts...** He lives in you (Jn 14:17). The moment you receive God's gift by trusting in his son's sacrifice for your sins, the Holy Spirit enters your life in a way that makes you his temple (1 Cor 6:19).

• **Commit yourself to follow his lead.** Don't resist him Acts 7:51 or grieve him Eph. 4:29-32 or quench him 1 Thess. 5:19. Don't neglect or ignore God's leading in your life. Make a decision or you'll wander off on your own.

• **Depend on the Spirit's guidance.** Once you really make that choice, then you want to keep it up! Put one foot in front of the other. Gal 5:25 **Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.** Since the Spirit is our very source of life, then let's follow his lead. Make decisions according to his leading. Prov 3:5,6 - **trust in the Lord....**

3. Why should we *walk by the Spirit*?

• **We need the power he offers.** We need it all the time. Every minute of every day! Friends who went on the last short-term mission trip to India mentioned how tough it was to run sound and video *without a consistent source* of electrical power. To have it sometimes, and not at other times, doesn't work. We not only need a source of power in our lives, but we need an uninterrupted source so our behavior can consistently bring glory to Christ. *Plug in!*

We can't be all that God wants us to be on our own. We can't get to where we need to go. We are dependent upon God's power to achieve victory. We can't live the Christian life by our own resources any more than we can save ourselves by our own efforts. Just as we rely on the work of Christ for our justification before God, so we need the Spirit's work to be sanctified. **Col 2:6 - as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.** We come alive spiritually **by grace through faith** and the same is true of how we live day by day. We need the power God supplies by means of his Spirit.

T - We also should walk by the Spirit because...

• **We need the guidance he offers.** Gal 5:18 - **led by the Spirit.** Examples: **Act 20:22,23** - Paul says the Spirit warned him about danger. **John 16:8 - he convicts us of sin.** You've felt your conscience. I read of some people who died in a fire because they had disabled the smoke alarm. They *deliberately deactivated* the very device that could have given them a life-saving warning. In the same way, some of us disconnect from God and can't hear his warnings anymore.

To say that God guides us doesn't mean that our role is merely passive. Being led by the Spirit doesn't make effort unnecessary. In the basketball games, the guys who *really have it* were still sweating. In Star Wars, Luke still aimed his missile. And in the Christian life, we still need to work and demonstrate discipline. But we are not on our own! We rely on a supernatural strength of the indwelling Spirit. He

doesn't direct us like a cop at a corner, but he guides us from within. **John 16:13 - But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.** Notice that he is the Spirit of truth. That's what qualifies him as our perfect guide. You don't want to listen to lies that mislead you. God's Spirit applies God's Word!

1 Cor 2:10 God reveals mysteries to us **by his Spirit.**

12 We have... received ...the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.

T - God has provided us with the Holy Spirit to meet our needs for power and guidance. I'm going to read you a little book to show you a picture of this. **Tandem book.**

4. Who should walk by the Spirit? Everyone! Me! You! Are you convinced? Sign on the line. Tell God, yes!

• **Your name here:** _____.

5. When should we walk by the Spirit?

Why not now? • **Today's date:** _____.

Prayer