What Does It Mean to “Walk In The Spirit?”
Message 6 in “Getting To Know The Holy Spirit” Series
Galatians 5:16-26 (NKJV)

As we continue with our series on “Getting to Know The Holy Spirit”
I would like to answer a very important question from God’s word
and that is: “What Does It Mean to Walk in The Spirit?”

Please turn with me in your Bibles to Galatians, the fifth
chapter. (Galatians 5:16-26 NKJV)

16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these
are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication,
uncleanness, lewdness,

20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish
ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you
beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such
things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness,
goodness, faithfulness

23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

24 And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and
desires.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.
On the day you and I accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, God gave us the wonderful gift of His Holy Spirit. He came to dwell within us to help us do what is humanly impossible for us to do and that is to transform us into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

Now if you are like most Christians, you have probably wondered at times how can I know for sure the Holy Spirit is truly living within me.

-Many believe if you truly have the Holy Spirit you will have certain feelings and emotions.

-Many believe if you truly have the Holy Spirit you will have certain supernatural experiences such as "speaking in unknown tongues" or having "visions and dreams."

But that is NOT what the Bible teaches. The Bible teaches us that the proof the Holy Spirit is living within us will be seen in our spiritual "walk." In other words, when one is truly indwelled by the Spirit, he or she will "walk in the Spirit."

In our scripture text, the apostle Paul gives us two solid proofs we are "Walking in the Spirit."

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Let’s consider......

PROOF #1: The Forsaking of Sin (vs. 16-18)

16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

1. What Paul is describing in these verses are two natures that are diametrically opposed to one another; the Spiritual nature and the sinful nature.
2. The goal and aim of the sinful nature is to please **SELF**. The goal and aim of the Spiritual nature is to please **GOD**.

3. Each of these natures says “no” to the other. The sinful nature says “no” to spiritual things. The spiritual nature says “no” to sinful things.

4. Now I have some “good news” and some “bad news” about that “inner struggle.”

   First, the bad news: That inner struggle between our sinful nature and our spiritual nature will continue until the day we die. It is a battle we will face every day we live. And as long as we try to live the Christian life by our own power and human effort we will live in defeat.

   But the good news is this: **The more we “walk by the power of the Holy Spirit the more victorious we will be over sin.**

5. The more we “walk in the Spirit” the more it will grieve us to do those sinful things which grieve the Holy Spirit.

6. In verses 19-21 we see FOUR TYPES of sins that should NOT be evident in our lives if we are truly “walking by the Spirit.”

   **(A) Sins of IMMORALITY** (v. 19a)

   - **adultery** - extramarital sex between a married person and somebody other than his or her spouse
   - **fornication** - sexual intercourse between two consenting adults, who are not married to each other

   **(B) SINS of IMPURITY.** (v.19b)

   - **impurity** - refers to sexual sins of the MIND and SPEECH. It has to do with LUSTING with with one’s eyes and mind.
   - **lewdness** - This refers to one’s hunger for and obsession with things that are vulgar, indecent or sexually immoral.
(C) SINS of IDOLATRY. (vs. 20, 21)

IDOLATRY- When we think of “idolatry” we think of false gods made out of wood, stone or metal. We think of the false gods worshipped by heathen people in foreign lands. But actually an idol is anything for which we are “greedy.”

If we are greedy for money, money becomes our idol. If we are greedy for material things, then material things become our idol. If we are obsessed with recreation and pleasure, then that becomes an idol.

SELFISH-AMBITION- Is a form of idolatry in that one puts his or her desires and wishes above all else. Selfish-ambition is to worship one’s self as God.

ENVY is a form of idolatry in that one desires what belongs to another, whether it be his mate, his money, his possessions or his position in life.

(D) SINS OF INDECENCY. (vs. 20,21)

SINS OF IDECENCY are those sins that are offensive, abusive, or harmful toward others:

In VERSE 20 Paul mentions: HATRED, CONTENTIONS, JEALOUSIES, OUTBURSTS OF WRATH, DISSENSIONS AND HERESIES.

In VERSE 21 he mentions: MURDERS, DRUNKENNESS and REVELRIES.

7. While all of these sins are evident in the lives of those who don’t know Christ, they should not be evident in the lives of those of us who have accepted Jesus Christ. In fact, the absence of these sins in our lives is one of the proofs “we are truly walking in the Spirit.”
But Paul gives us another un-deniable proof that we are walking in the Spirit and that is…..

PROOF #2: The Fruit of The Spirit

1. Before we look at the fruit of the spirit individually, let’s look at the fruit collectively.

First of all notice it is called “the fruit of the Spirit” not the “fruits” of the Spirit. The fruit the Holy Spirit produces in us is not nine different fruits, but rather one singular fruit that is manifested in nine distinct qualities.

“The fruit of the Spirit” is Christ-likeness and it is manifested in nine distinct Christ-like qualities.

When Paul says, “the fruit of the Spirit” is love, he’s not talking about human love, but Christ-like agape’ love.

When Paul says, “the fruit of the Spirit” is joy, he’s not talking about human joy, but rather Christ-like joy.

And so on and so forth.

Secondly, by referring to it as “the fruit of the Spirit” he is revealing the Holy Spirit is the origin of the fruit.

You and I cannot produce spiritual fruit no matter how hard we try. We cannot produce spiritual fruit by our own human effort. We can only bear spiritual fruit as the Holy Spirit produces it within us. The amount of fruit the Spirit produces within us is dependent upon two things: First, that we abide in Christ. John 15:5  "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing.

And secondly, that we yield to the Holy Spirit. If you and I are constantly grieving the Spirit and quenching the Spirit, we are hindering Him from producing “spiritual fruit” in our lives.
2. Now let’s look at these nine **Christ-like qualities** separately.

These nine qualities have been divided into three sets of three.

**(A) The first three qualities have to do with our relationship with GOD.** (v. 22a)

**LOVE** Evidence of this **Christ-like love** in my life will be seen in my **sacrificial nature**. It will be evident in my willingness to reach out to others regardless of who they are, what they are or what I might get in return. It will be evident in my willingness to put the needs and well-being of others ahead of my own.

**JOY** Evidence of this **Christ-like joy** in my life will be seen in how I respond to life’s circumstances and challenges. It means I will rejoice in God’s goodness regardless of how difficult or trying my circumstances may be.

**PEACE** Evidence of this **Christ-like peace** in my life will be seen in my **contentment** in good times and bad, knowing that God is in complete control.

**(B) The second set of three qualities has to do with our relationship with OTHERS.** (v. 22b)

**LONGSUFFERING** Evidence of **Christ-like longsuffering** will be seen in our **patient endurance** with others in their times of weakness, failure or difficulty. To be longsuffering means we won’t give up on people even if they disappoint us or fail us.

**KINDNESS** Evidence of **Christ-like kindness** will be seen in our treatment of others. It means we will speak words of kindness even when spoken harshly to. It means we will treat others with kindness even when they have been unkind to us.
GOODNESS  It is interesting that the Greek word for “goodness” means “to be like God.” Remember Jesus said “Call no man good for there is only One who is good, and that is God, the Father.” When the Holy Spirit produces Christ-like goodness in us it will be evident in the way we show the goodness of God toward those who may be the least worthy or deserving of it.

(C) Then the last set of three qualities has to do with our INWARD man. (vs. 22c, 23a)

FAITHFULNESS  Evidence of this Christ-like faithfulness will be seen in the way we keep our word, keep our promises, and keep our vows. There is a Christ-like integrity and honor in the man or woman who is truly walking in the Spirit.

GENTLENESS  Evidence of this Christ-like gentleness will be seen in our ability to respond with dignity and kindness when provoked, even when we are tempted to blow our stack. Think how many times Christ was provoked, falsely accused and blatantly lied about, and yet as “a sheep is dumb before its shearers, He did not open His mouth.” That is the kind of “gentleness” that will be evident in our lives when we are truly “walking with the Spirit.”

SELF-CONTROL  Evidence of this Christ-like self-control will be seen in our habits. When we surrender our desires to the control of the Spirit, it will be evident in the absence of sinful or self-destructive habits in our lives.

LOVE, JOY and PEACE  These cause us to grow UPWARD.

LONGSUFFERING, KINDNESS and GOODNESS  These cause us to grow OUTWARDLY.

FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS and SELF-CONTROL  These cause us to grow INWARDLY.
C O N C L U S I O N

How can I know for sure I am “walking in the Holy Spirit?”

Answer these two simple questions:

The first question is this: “Have I forsaken my sinful ways?”

Have I forsaken my sinful habits?
Have I forsaken my sinful talk?
Have I forsaken my sinful attitudes?

Do I hate sin as God hates sin? Does sin grieve me as it grieves the Holy Spirit?

The second question is this: "Am I bearing the fruit of the Spirit?"

Do I have a Christ-like LOVE, JOY and PEACE?

Do I have a Christ-like LONGSUFFERING, KINDNESS and GENTLENESS?

Do I have a Christ-like FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS and SELF-CONTROL?

I want to leave you with these encouraging words this morning. Perhaps you started out your Christian life strong and then after a period of several months or years you settled into a “spiritual comfort zone.” Perhaps you became contented with “status quo Christianity.” By that I mean, as long as you attended Church and put your money in the offering plate each week, everything was fine and dandy in your spiritual life. But then one day you started realizing how spiritually empty you were. You started realizing you hadn’t made a whole lot of progress since you first became a Christian. If that has been your experience, don’t feel badly, you’re not alone.

But now after all these years you find yourself wanting to get serious about your relationship with Christ. You find yourself desiring to grow spiritually. What’s happening? I’ll tell you what’s happening. The Holy Spirit is working on you and in you. You are finally realizing after all these years you can’t live the Christian life on your own. You need the help of the Holy Spirit.
Brothers and sisters, “let us walk in the Spirit.”

Let us “Forsake our sins.”

Let us “Bear the fruit of the Spirit.”