

GROWING IN GRACE

CEDAR CREEK COMMUNITY CHURCH

How should we then live?
Practical Christian living in light of the Gospel.

WEEK 3: WALKING IN THE SPIRIT PART 1

INTRODUCTION

- Last week was about our purpose...why God saved us.
- While there are more reasons, we discussed that **we were saved for more than heaven.**
 - God saved us so that we would be active in the church, active in each other's lives, and encourage one another to keep walking the narrow path.
- **God also saved us to become more like Christ.**
 - We now are to grow in the same attitudes of Christ. We now have His mindset as we think about God, the church, and others.
- **God saved us for transformation.**
 - As we gaze upon the beauty of Christ, as we sink His truths deep into our thoughts, we are experiencing transformation in our life with Him and with others.
 - We notice this transformation as our desires change, our affections deepen, and our actions towards others start to mimic Christ's actions.
- **God also saved us under His sovereign purpose.**
 - Our life is not a collection of random events, but God is using each event in the larger picture of your life. This means we can ask *how is God growing me through this event?*
- **God saved us so that we would become mature.**
 - Our conversion is not the finish line of our walk with Christ; it is the starting gun.
 - Our personal goal should be growth in all areas...maturing takes effort and time.
- **God saved us for His glory.**
 - As you and I were moved from darkness to light, it was not about us but about God.

- As we grow more and more into the image of Christ and reflect His character to the onlooking world, God is glorified.
 - This now leads us into our current study on the walking in the Spirit. There is no way that you and I would be able to accomplish any of the above purposes without the Spirit of God dwelling in us.
 - Before we start looking at what the Bible has to say...what do you think walking in the Spirit means? If a new covert comes up to you and asks you this...how do you answer?
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- Admittedly, this can be a hard question to answer for most people.
- Our aim as we study this very important doctrine in the Christian faith is to demystify what it means to walk in the Spirit. Furthermore, we also want to know what the Bible says so that we can live for the purposes that God has for us in this life as we prepare for the next.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

- As we begin our study and aim of defining what it means to walk in the Spirit, it is helpful to simply start by looking at what the Bible says about this important topic.
- We are going to start by looking into the Old Testament for prophecies and promises from God concerning the Holy Spirit.
- We are then going to trace the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts.
- After that survey, we will seek to know the purpose of the Holy Spirit coming to us so that we will be able to know what it looks like in the life of the believer.
- Finally, tracing the New Testament author's writings about the Holy Spirit, we are going to find out what it really means to walk in the Spirit.

The Promise of the Permanent Indwelling Spirit of God

- **Ezekiel 36:26-27** “Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. [27] I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”

- **Jeremiah 31:31-34** “Behold, days are coming, declares the LORD, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, [32] not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,’ declares the LORD. [33] ‘But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,’ declares the LORD, ‘I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. [34] They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,’ declares the LORD, ‘for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.’”
 - Both of these passages speak looking forward to a new time. It is a time when the Old Covenant would be replaced with the New Covenant.
 - One of the New Covenant promises was a new heart (which is regeneration) and the spirit within each person who has been regenerated.
 - But notice in Ezekiel that regeneration precedes obedience. A person is unable (still responsible) to be obedient to the will of God.
- **Joel 2:28-29** “It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. [29] Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. “
- This is an interesting prophecy by Joel. Not only is there going to be a day when God’s Spirit is poured out on all mankind (Jews and Gentiles alike), but there is a specific time when this is going to happen to Israel.
 - This was partially fulfilled at Pentecost with Peter’s sermon (Acts 2:14-21) as the Holy Spirit fell on the Jews first. This finds its ultimate fulfillment during the Millennial Kingdom.
- **Acts 1:8** “...but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”
 - We often forget Jesus’ final words to His disciples regarding the Holy Spirit.
 - Once Jesus left, the Holy Spirit would come and empower them to be Jesus’ witnesses locally and all around the world.
- Simply put, we know that God promised a time when the Holy Spirit would come and give God’s people new hearts and live in them and lead them into obedience.

Fulfillment of the Promise of the Spirit

- If the Holy Spirit has come, there should be the changes seen in people who have received the Spirit.
- ***The Spirit was to the Nation of Israel or the Jews.***
 - In Peter's sermon, he says in **Acts 2:36** "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified."
 - How did they respond? **Acts 2:37** "Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?'"
 - Pentecost was not a Gentile holiday/festival, but for the Jews.
 - The word means "50" in Greek and it is 50 days after Passover.
 - In the OT, it is the Feast of Weeks (Lev. 23:15; Deut. 16:9).
 - Since the Feast of Weeks was one of the "harvest feasts," the Jews were commanded to "present an offering of new grain to the Lord."¹
- Jesus was crucified as the "Passover Lamb" and rose from the grave at the Feast of Firstfruits. Following His resurrection, Jesus spent the next 40 days teaching His disciples before ascending to heaven ([Acts 1](#)). Fifty days after His resurrection and after ascending to heaven to sit at the right hand of God, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit as promised ([John 14:16–17](#)) to indwell the disciples and empower them for ministry. The promised Holy Spirit arrived on the Day of Pentecost, which is another name for the Feast of Weeks.²
- In Jewish tradition, the 10 Commandments were given to Moses during the Feast of Weeks as well.
- There is a lot of significance to when Jesus died, rose, how long He stayed, when He ascended, and when the Holy Spirit came.
- The OT was a shadow of what was coming and God used it all to show them what to look for.
- With all that being said, as we looked at from Acts 2, Peter's sermon at Pentecost was the initial act of the Spirit coming upon the Jewish people, fulfilling their own Feasts and prophecy.
- ***The Spirit was also for all people who would believe God for salvation.***
- **Acts 8:14-17** "Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, [15] who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. [16] For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been

¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Feast-of-Weeks.html>

² Ibid.

baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. [17] Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.”

- The second group of people who received the Holy Spirit were the Samaritans. This group of people were enemies of the Jews.
- It is believed that is why they are singled out as receiving the Holy Spirit.
- “This was a transitional period in which confirmation by the apostles was necessary to verify the inclusion of a new group of people into the church. Because of the animosity that existed between Jews and Samaritans, it was essential for the Samaritans to receive the Spirit, in the presence of the leaders of the Jerusalem church, for the purpose of maintaining a unified church. The delay also revealed the Samaritans’ need to come under apostolic authority.”³
- **Acts 10:44-48** “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. [45] All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. [46] For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, [47] "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?" [48] And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.”
 - There are now three distinct groups who have received the Holy Spirit upon conversion. The Jews were first at Pentecost, then as they Jews went out to be witnesses for Christ the Samaritans and the Gentiles were also given the Holy Spirit.
- It is evident that all people have access to the same Holy Spirit from God and through faith in Jesus.
- ***The Spirit would regenerate a heart of stone into a heart of flesh.***
- **Acts 2:37** “Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’”
 - “Luke doth now declare the fruit of the sermon, to the end we may know that the power of the Holy Ghost was not only showed forth in the diversity of tongues, but also in their hearts which heard. And he noteth a double fruit; first, that they were touched with the feeling of sorrow; and, secondly, that they were obedient to Peter’s counsel. This is the beginning of

³ The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible. Act 8:16.

repentance, this is the entrance unto godliness, to be sorry for our sins, and to be wounded with the feeling of our miseries.”⁴

- **Acts 16:14** “A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.”
 - “For we must note the temperature or moderation which Luke setteth down here, that we can have or obtain nothing by the hearing of the word alone, without the grace of the Spirit; and that the Spirit is given us, not that he may bring contempt of the word, but rather that he may dip [instil] into our minds, and write in our hearts the faith thereof.”⁵
- **Acts 7:51** “You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did.”
 - Notice the connection that Stephen makes before he is stoned to death. They were *always resisting the Holy Spirit*...not just them, but also their fathers.
 - They rejected the message and the people who were sent by God to them.
 - Their hearts were uncircumcised; they were still veiled so that they could not know the truth. In other words, the Spirit had not regenerated their hearts into salvation.
- While the list could go on, the Spirit was given at the Day of Pentecost and subsequently given to every new believer from then on.
- God promised the Spirit in the Old Testament; He came with visible signs as the church was transitioning from Judaism to Christianity.
- He now has specific purposes which we are going to look at.

The Purposes or Roles of the Holy Spirit

- **John 14:16-17** “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; [17] that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.”
- Jesus promise to His disciples was one of comfort. They had been with Him for about 3 years and now He was going away to heaven.
- He did not want His disciples to feel helpless, so He sends *another Helper*.

⁴ John Calvin and Henry Beveridge, *Commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles*, vol. 1 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 115.

⁵ Ibid., 104.

- This means one who comes alongside to help...to encourage or to exhort.
- Also, a purpose of the Holy Spirit's coming was so that they would not be alone, but now they would have "another" like Jesus to be with them forever.
 - The Holy Spirit will dwell permanently in believers.
- He is the Spirit of truth who is not for the world's comfort, but for those who follow Jesus. It is only the Spirit who is the source of all truth. Apart from His work in our hearts, we cannot know God's truth.
 - **1 Corinthians 2:12-13** "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, [13] which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words."
- **John 15:26** "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me..."
 - It is interesting that Jesus says the Spirit will testify about Him and then in the next verse, Jesus says, "and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning."
 - "The Holy Spirit would both testify of Jesus and empower the disciples to testify of Him in the face of the world's hatred, hostility, and persecution. This promise has been fulfilled for two thousand years, and it continues to be fulfilled as Christians around the globe bear witness to Christ even unto death."⁶
 - We are told by Jesus again in **John 16:14** "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you."
- Here is an interesting question for us to think about as we work our way to towards what it means to walk in the Spirit. Do our actions that are attributed to the Spirit bring more attention to ourselves, to the Spirit, or to Jesus?
- **1 Corinthians 12:13** "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."
 - The Holy Spirit was sent to bring unity in the church.
 - Through our own means and desires, there would never be true unity between people.

⁶ R. C. Sproul, *John*, St. Andrew's Expository Commentary (Lake Mary, FL: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2009), 295.

- It is only through the work of the Spirit that people from all different backgrounds, cultures, ideologies, etc. can be united as one.
- **1 Corinthians 12:11** “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.”
 - The Spirit gives and empowers believers to use their spiritual gifts.
 - As God places each person in the church (1 Cor 12:18), the Spirit then gives them gifts that are not for their own good and edification, but rather to be a blessing to the people around them.
 - **1 Corinthians 12:7** “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”
- **John 16:8-11** “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; [9] concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; [10] and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; [11] and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”
 - In this verse, we see a three-fold ministry the Spirit will perform in relation to the unsaved world. He will “convict” the world; that is, He will reprove it or show it to be wrong. This reproof will target three areas in which the world needs admonishing: sin, righteousness, and judgment.
 - The world must also be convicted of righteousness, and this, too, is something the Holy Spirit does. There is a righteous standard we are all held to, despite the world’s stubborn denial of absolute truth.
 - The world is facing judgment, and the Holy Spirit also convicts them of this truth. There is a day of reckoning scheduled—a day in which the holy God will mete out justice and rid His creation of sin.⁷
 - There is no amount of preaching, pleading or convincing that can bring about salvation in a person. If the Holy Spirit is not working in the heart and mind, the person will not be born again.
- **Titus 3:5** “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit...”

⁷ <https://www.gotquestions.org/convict-world-sin-righteousness-judgment.html> (all 3 bullet points)

- Again, it is only by the Holy Spirit that our hearts are regenerated.

Every believer has the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation

- **1 Corinthians 12:13** “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”
 - Every Christian has the Holy Spirit living in them. All believers from Pentecost were baptized into one body at the moment of their salvation.
 - “You see that the baptism of the Spirit includes *all* believers. In fact, the baptism of the Spirit is what makes us one body. Without that baptism we are not part of the body of Christ. So, everyone in the body has been baptized in the Spirit.”⁸
- The baptism of the Holy Spirit is never sought after. The Bible never says that we are to pray to be baptized in the Spirit. To be born again is to be baptized in the Spirit of God.
- “How do people receive the Spirit? First, the Spirit regenerates, giving us a new birth. In the new birth, the Spirit is like the wind, which goes anywhere it wants (John 3:8). So, in the first instance, it is not we who receive the Spirit but the Spirit who receives us.”⁹
- This is a one-time event that happens at regeneration and will be with us forever (Jhn 14:16). This is needed, as we’ll come to see, in order for us to do the works that God has for us in the world.
- Again, we don’t need to pray for this or seek to have another experience of baptism. It is a once and for all experience for every born-again believer.

Every believer needs to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit

- “A simple definition of Spirit filling is this: To be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit. It is to have one’s person and actions characterized by the Spirit’s control.”¹⁰
- When we talk about filling of the Spirit, it is interesting to look at how the biblical writers changed how it was used as the church began to mature.
- If we remember that the books of Acts is a transitional book, we can see a pattern that exists to show us how the early church started and how we today should be.

⁸ John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006), 163.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Rolland McCune, *A Systematic Theology of Biblical Christianity: The Doctrines of Man, Sin, Christ, and the Holy Spirit*, vol. 2 (Allen Park, MI: Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 340.

- **Until ca. AD 48.** The period from Pentecost through Paul’s first missionary journey gives further illustrations of Spirit filling in the church age. Scripture records eight occasions of Holy Spirit enablement from AD 30 to 48:
 - Peter preached in his native tongue, as he had in Acts 2:14–40 (Acts 4:8).
 - Christians spoke God’s Word with boldness in their native tongues (Acts 4:31).
 - Seven men were chosen to assist the apostles (Acts 6:3, 5).
 - Stephen preached fearlessly (Acts 7:55; see 6:10).
 - Paul was filled shortly after his conversion (Acts 9:17).
 - Barnabas ministered at Antioch (Acts 11:24).
 - Paul rebuked Elymas the magician (Acts 13:9–11).
 - Paul, Barnabas, and their disciples ministered on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:52).¹¹
- For roughly the first 18-20 years of church history, there was individual Holy Spirit enablement recorded in the book of Acts.
- **AD 48 and Beyond.** From Acts 14 through Revelation 22 and beyond (at least until the rapture of the church), there are no mentions of “filling” that relate to enablement or equipping as had been the case in the Old Testament, the Gospels, Pentecost, and the period after Pentecost through the first missionary journey. It is thus assumed that the “filling” described in Ephesians 5:18–21 prevailed as the exclusive form of filling beginning with the second missionary journey, which commenced in Acts 14.¹²
- **Ephesians 5:18-21** “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, **but be filled with the Spirit**, [19] speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; [20] always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; [21] and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.”
- When Paul writes *be filled*¹³:
- **It’s an imperative** (a command, not an option).
- **It’s plural** (applies to the whole church body, not just super-Christians).
- **It’s passive** (you don’t fill yourself; you let the Spirit fill you).

¹¹ John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 371.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Taken from writings of both MacArthur and Köstenberger.

- **It's present tense** (a continuous, daily, moment-by-moment lifestyle).
- **To be filled also means to be controlled.**
- “From the new birth on, the believer has the complete possession of the Holy Spirit in a permanent, personal indwelling. Spirit filling means that the Holy Spirit is taking possession of the believer. The yielded believer is brought under the control of the Holy Spirit. It must be understood that there are degrees of filling (i.e., it is not all or nothing at all). Levels of obedience are indicated in levels of the Spirit's control.”¹⁴
- While all believers have the Holy Spirit living in them from salvation, not all believers submit to the Spirit's control the same. (This will be covered in depth in the next section.)
- Unfortunately, while the Holy Spirit is living in all believers, they can still submit themselves to the world that is around them.
- **1 Corinthians 3:1-3** “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. [2] I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, [3] for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?”
- The part that we need to focus on first is Paul's use of the word *brethren* and saying that they were *infants in Christ*.
- He says they had milk of the word to drink...
 - They could only handle the basics of the Bible because they were not even maturing with that knowledge. They couldn't get to the meat of the Word.
 - They were *fleshly*...notice how Paul does not say *in the flesh*...he says *in Christ*.
 - He says they were *walking like mere men*. Meaning, while they are in Christ, they are living their lives like those who are not saved.
 - This means that through their own willful immaturity, they were not growing in the Word but still acting like babies with one another.
 - In this case, it was jealousy and strife that was taking center stage...not love and kindness.
 - While Paul does treat them as believers, he is not afraid to rebuke them for their very immature and unloving behavior towards one another.

¹⁴ Rolland McCune, *A Systematic Theology of Biblical Christianity: The Doctrines of Man, Sin, Christ, and the Holy Spirit*, vol. 2 (Allen Park, MI: Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 343.

What is the difference between the milk and the solid food that Paul's talking about?

- “Milk is not a reference to certain doctrines, but to the more easily digestible truths of doctrine that were given to new believers... Solid food [meat] is the deeper features of the doctrines of scripture. The difference is not in kind of truth, but degree of depth.”¹⁵
- “Immaturity is not a lack of theological information; it is a lack of faith-driven obedience.”¹⁶
- “...a carnal church can listen to deep theological lectures all day, take endless notes, and still be on a "milk diet" if it produces no fruit. For example: A believer knows the *theology* of forgiveness (milk). They can define it, quote verses on it, and agree it is necessary. But the **meat** of the word is when that believer is deeply sinned against, feels the pull of the flesh toward bitterness, and relies heavily on the Holy Spirit to actively crucify their pride and grant genuine forgiveness to their enemy.”¹⁷
- Each of us will have differing degrees of understanding what the Bible says. That degree of understanding will be shown by how we live out the truth we know.
- This is what the Bible means when we read:
- **Galatians 5:15-17** “But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. [16] But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. [17] For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.”
- The more that apply what we have learned, the more mature we become in our walk with the Lord.
- This doesn't mean there are no setbacks, but it does mean that those who are mature in the Word and in the Lord are making it their aim and priority not to just consume information but make sure that it is put into practice every single day.
- **Romans 8:12-13** “So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh-- [13] for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”
- As believers, *brethren*, we have no obligation to give in to feelings that promote or elevate our own personal interests and desires. But to truly live means we submit to the Spirit as He leads.

¹⁵ *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1984), Chapter 7 ("The Disease of Division, Part 1: Carnality").

¹⁶ Jerry Wragg and Paul Shirley, *Free to Be Holy: The Liberating Grace of Walking by Faith* (Jupiter, FL: Three Sixteen Publishing, 2019)

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, taken from chapters 5 & 7