

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT PART #2

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BIBLE

THE SECRET

EPHESIANS 5:18

When you and I sit and read the New Testament we are often overwhelmed at what amazing things those saints lived and did for God. In fact as I read over some of the more vivid parts of the New Testament some of the words that came to my mind were unbelievable, incredible and unattainable. Isn't that where most of us get to after a while? Unbelievable, incredible, but alas, unattainable for me!

What do I mean? Think over just a few lives in the New Testament.

- ✓ THE APOSTLE PETER was a stumbling, bumbling man who always was sticking both feet up to the knees into his mouth. In fact after the 1st Lord's Supper one servant girl in the dark scarred some hellish curses and denials of Jesus. Yet only days later he is standing up in front of 3,000 families, the murderous religious establishment of Jerusalem and the Roman army - totally fearless. He never wavers again and from that day onward he faces the inevitability of personal pain and martyrdom with serenity. Unbelievable, incredible, but alas, unattainable for me? Or is it possible?
- ✓ THE APOSTLE PAUL was beaten within an inch of death. He was neglected to the point of abuse, thrown into a dark, damp, bug infested dungeon, fastened down with iron and wood stocks and left to grow infection, burn with fever and perhaps die. What was the result? He started to quote and sing aloud from the Psalms. He was so convincing almost everyone who heard it wanted to become a Christian also! Unbelievable, incredible, but alas, unattainable for me? Or is it possible?
- ✓ THE APOSTLE JOHN was alone, imprisoned, troubled and for all he knew forgotten by God and man. He was on a baked rock in the middle of no where, kind of like an ancient version of an Alcatraz or San Quentin Penitentiary. He survived beatings, mobs, and jails and even lived with the scars that marked his body from the boiling oil torture the Romans had subjected him to. So what comes out of a wasted and scarred body? He is in the Spirit, worshiping God on a Sunday in nowhere. And, all

alone on that island prison he gets the best look at Heaven's beauty even seen. Unbelievable, incredible, but alas, unattainable for me? Or is it possible?

- ✓ The galaxy of unbelievable lives goes way beyond the Apostles. There are countless 1st century saints who found their pathway colliding with the godless and belligerent Roman Society, whose lives ended in the sands of the arena, at the stake or in ghastly martyrdom. Yet history records they went to their end singing, radiant with joy and serenely. Unbelievable, incredible, but alas, unattainable for me? Or is it possible?

Then for the past many centuries the heroes have continued.

- ✓ Athanasius in the 4th century stood "contra mundam" against the whole world, alone standing for the undiluted deity of Jesus Christ in the face of the forefathers of the false doctrine of the Jehovah's Witness movement. Unbelievable, incredible, but alas, unattainable for me? Or is it possible?
- ✓ Martin Luther in the 16th century stood alone at the Diet of Worms and in the face of excommunication and death by fire said, "Here I stand upon God's Word, I can take no other stand!" Unbelievable, incredible, but alas, unattainable for me? Or is it possible?
- ✓ In the 18th century two men stand out. Adonirum Judson worked 7 years in Burma without seeing even one soul converted. He was starved for weeks and left for dead in prison. Yet he never quit. William Carey of India faced the mental insanity of his beloved wife, the hostility of the Hindus and yet never quit until God's Word was translated. Unbelievable, incredible, but alas, unattainable for me? Or is it possible?
- ✓ In the 19th century CT Studd faced sickness, weakness and mortal danger among cannibal pygmies of Africa's darkest jungles. Yet 30,000 were saved, baptized, clothed and lived as saints in the devil's own dark jungles. Unbelievable, incredible, but alas, unattainable for me? Or is it possible?

Yes, the answer to the question of how to live an unbelievable, incredible life is found in our text this morning. In fact, one word sums up Peter's life, Paul's life and John's life. This same word summarizes how the galaxy of 1st through 20th century saints has stood alone triumphantly for Christ. In fact, one word tells all there is about walking in the Spirit this morning.

Please turn with me to Ephesians 5:18-19, and as we stand and read, may we find the secret they knew and followed and like them, do the same!

plhrou`sqe

One word explains it all

IMPERATIVE
PLURAL
PASSIVE
PRESENT

When the Holy Spirit picked the words to write down His message He was very specific. Perhaps no where else in all God's Word is the message of the grammar clearer than here!

IMPERATIVE An imperative verb means God is commanding. He is not offering a suggestion to us for our consideration! He is commanding us as Lord God Almighty. The filling of the Spirit of God into our life is our supreme obligation.

PLURAL A plural verb here means that God is speaking to all of us. When He says don't get drunk it is for all believers. The same for the filling. So the Spirit filled walk is the high calling and spiritual duty for every one of God's children.

PASSIVE A passive verb means God is asking us to open up to His filling. Passive means allow this to come into your life. Let the Spirit fill you is what God is saying. This is a call to unreserved yielding to God's control.

PRESENT The use of a present tense means God is offering a continuous filling. Another tense, the aorist, would mean a single action like John 2:7 when Jesus said fill the water pots. But a present imperative means that the river of God's Holy Spirit wants to flow into and overflow out of our lives!

So God Almighty commands
all of us
to let His Spirit
continuously be filling you!

To illustrate this joy, Paul used the familiar image of drunkenness: "Be not drunk with wine... but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). When the believers at Pentecost were filled with the Spirit, the crowd accused them of being drunk with new wine (Acts 2:13–15). There was such a joyfulness about them that the unbelievers could think of no better comparison. But some practical lessons can be learned from the contrasts. To begin with, the drunk is under the control of another force, since alcohol is actually a depressant. He feels a great sense of release—all his troubles are gone. He can "lick anybody in the house!" The drunk is not ashamed to express himself (though what he says and does is shameful), nor can he hide what is going on in his life.

Transfer this picture to the believer who is filled with the Spirit. God controls his life, and he experiences a deep joy he is not afraid to express to the glory of God. Of course, the drunk is really out of control, since the alcohol affects his brain, while the believer experiences a beautiful self-control that is really God in control. Self-control is among the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23). "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" (1 Cor. 14:32). The drunk makes a fool of himself, but the Spirit-filled Christian glorifies God and is willing to be a "fool for Christ's sake" (1 Cor. 4:10). The drunk calls attention to himself, while the Spirit-filled believer is a witness for Christ.

It is possible for the old nature to *counterfeit* some of the fruit of the Spirit, but the flesh can never *produce* the fruit of the Spirit. One difference is this: when the Spirit produces fruit, God gets the glory and the Christian is not conscious of his spirituality; but when the flesh is at work, the person is inwardly proud of himself and is pleased when others compliment him. The work of the Spirit is to make us more like Christ for His glory, not for the praise of men.¹

It is certainly not difficult to live or work with someone who is filled with the Spirit and joyful. He has a song in his heart and on his lips. The drunk often sings, but his songs only reveal the corruption in his heart. The Spirit-filled Christian's song comes from God, a song he could never sing apart from the Spirit's power. Christians who are filled with the Holy Spirit enjoy being together and experience a sense of joyful oneness in the Lord. They do not need the false stimulants of the world. They have the Spirit of God—and He is all they need. 2

Being filled with the Spirit is living in the conscious presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, letting His mind, through the Word, dominate everything that is thought and done. Being filled with the Spirit is the same as walking LIKE Jesus did on earth!

First, we will see the Fruit of the Spirit in our Personal Relationship with God.

There are 15 manifestations of the flesh in verses 19-21. Of these 8 are dealing with interpersonal problems. It is not enough to say that we have always struggled in these areas. Or, to say I sinned and go on. The Scriptures show us that a truly spiritual person will be growing in a visible way in each of these areas.

1. LOVE is the absence of selfishness. It is the product of the Holy Spirit present in our lives Rom. 5:5 says. And it even “flowers in the presence of the unlovely and hostile”.³ LOVE. One of several Gr. words for love, *agape*, is the love of choice, referring not to an emotional affection, physical attraction, or a familial bond, but to respect, devotion, and affection that leads to willing, self-sacrificial service (John 15:13; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 3:16, 17).
 - Can others trace my progress in expressing God's love? Am I less selfish and self-seeking than I was last month?
2. JOY is the spiritual quality that releases us from circumstances. Because Love and Depression can not coexist. However, the Apostle Paul said that he was II Cor 6:10 - sorrowful yet always full of joy. Christian joy is not a shallow emotion that, like a thermometer, rises and falls with the changing atmosphere of the home. Rather, Christian joy is a deep experience of adequacy and confidence in spite of the circumstances around us. The Christian can be joyful even in the midst of pain and suffering. This kind of joy is not a thermometer but a thermostat. Instead of rising and falling with the circumstances, it determines the spiritual temperature of the

¹ Wiersbe, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997.

² Wiersbe, Warren W., *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books) 1997.

³ J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Discipleship* p. 118.

circumstances. Paul put it beautifully when he wrote, “I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Phil. 4:11). JOY. A happiness based on unchanging divine promises and eternal spiritual realities. It is the sense of well being experienced by one who knows all is well between himself and the Lord (1 Pet. 1:8). Joy is not the result of favorable circumstances, and even occurs when those circumstances are the most painful and severe (John 16:20–22). Joy is a gift from God, and as such, believers are not to manufacture it but to delight in the blessing they already possess (Rom. 14:17; Phil. 4:4).

- Do those that know me and watch my life see me as a joyful person?
3. PEACE is the internal serenity that only God can give. “Peace is love in repose, with no borrowing of tomorrows troubles today.”⁴ Troubles are not absent. Rather, God is present! “When the Holy Spirit is not grieved the dove of peace is able to alight on the heart.” PEACE. The inner calm that results from confidence in one’s saving relationship with Christ. The verb form denotes binding together and is reflected in the expression “having it all together.” Like joy, peace is not related to one’s circumstances (John 14:27; Rom. 8:28; Phil. 4:6, 7, 9). Has peace become more and more a way of life for you this year?

Secondly, we will see the Fruit of the Spirit in our Public Walk with Others.

4. PATIENCE is the absence of personal irritation at the actions of others. It is that bearing long with people that Paul spoke of in I Corinthians. Patience is also one of the Supreme attributes of God. It is His character that is revealed as being gracious and longsuffering. See Exod 34:6; Num 14:18; II Peter 3:9. LONGSUFFERING This is patience or the ability to endure injuries inflicted by others and the willingness to accept irritating or painful situations (Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12; 1 Tim. 1:15, 16).
5. KINDNESS is a beautiful reflection of God in our lives. It is the absence of an abrasive manner in my dealings with people. It is a chosen reflection of Ephesians 2:8 and 4:32 in my life. “Kindness is seen as that sensitivity toward others that issues into deeds of self sacrifice and love even toward the unlovely and undeserving ones. Kindness will soften any word or act that might hurt another. KINDNESS. Tender concern for others, reflected in a desire to treat others gently, just as the Lord treats all believers (Matt. 11:28, 29; 19:13, 14; 2 Tim. 2:24).
- ✓ Is my character showing an increasing tendency toward personal kindness in my way with others?
6. GOODNESS is being Godlike! It is the opposite of fallen humanity. Today to call someone good is an insult. If you really want to demean someone, call them a “goodie, goodie”. But, look at Jesus in Acts 10:38. When the Holy Spirit anointed His life, what came out? As one author wrote -- “Ecstatic utterances? Spectacular Miracles? Flamboyant Sermons? No! He simply went about doing good. ” GOODNESS. Moral and spiritual excellence manifested in active kindness (Rom.

⁴ Ibid.

5:7). Believers are commanded to exemplify goodness (6:10; 2 Thess. 1:11). Am I a visibly better person than last year? Do people see me doing good to all those around me?

Finally, we will see the Fruit of the Spirit in our Private Life with our Self.

7. FAITHFULNESS is the idea here. A trustworthy and dependable life. The kind of person that keeps their own life in order so that you can count on them. Like Psalm 15 speaks of, they make and keep their word. faithfulness. Loyalty and trustworthiness (Lam. 3:22; Phil. 2:7–9; 1 Thess. 5:24; Rev. 2:10).
 - Am I making strides in reliability and dependability?
8. MEEKNESS is the opposite of asserting ourselves. The Lord said that the Meek were the ultimate winners. [Matthew 5:5] Those who are Servants of the Lord must not strive II Timothy 2:24. They resist selfish ambition [James 3:16] because it is a reflection of Satan not God. Remember Jesus described Himself as 'Meek and Lowly' [Mt 11:29] GENTLENESS. Better translated "meekness." It is a humble and gentle attitude that is patiently submissive in every offense, while having no desire for revenge or retribution. In the NT, it is used to describe 3 attitudes: submission to the will of God (Col. 3:12), teachability (James 1:21), and consideration of others (Eph. 4:2)..
 - What shape is my personal agenda in? Is it intact and my rights being defended? Or, is it in hopeless shape, crucified with Christ and fading?
9. DISCIPLINE is defined by the Greek Dictionary as "a virtue, which consists in mastery of the appetites and passions, especially the sensual ones." The only force that can control or flesh is the Holy Spirit. When yielded to Him we become vessels that are worshipful sacrifices to Him no longer to self. Self cannot control self. Flesh is not able to harness flesh. Only the Spirit can discipline us. SELF-CONTROL. This refers to restraining passions and appetites (1 Cor. 9:25; 2 Pet. 1:5, 6). no law. When a Christian walks by the Spirit and manifests His fruit, he needs no external law to produce the attitudes and behavior that please God (cf. Rom. 8:4).
 - Ask yourself, am I more patient than I was three months ago? or less? If we are not increasing in patience it is only that we are not yielding and submitting to the Holy Spirit.
 - Do others see me as graciously under the control of God's Spirit of Discipline? Are you beating under and giving knockout blows to your flesh? Paul was in I Cor 9:27. Can we do any less?

Well, are they present? Are they growing? The proof is in how we are with our relationships