

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE WALK BY THE SPIRIT?

(GALATIANS 5:13–26 ESV)

OVERVIEW:

WE LIVE IN OUR GOD-GIVEN OPPORTUNITY WHICH IS TO WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE IN THE SPIRIT.

(Galatians 5:13 ESV) For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an **opportunity** (ἀφορμή—see below) for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Walking by the Spirit we engage our world from the **new base of operation** we have in Jesus Christ. From this new grace position of freedom from our sins, we live by the Spirit.

“**OPPORTUNITY**” ... ἀφορμή [aphorme]: a place from which a movement or attack is made, a **base of operations**; that which gives occasion and supplies matter for an undertaking, the incentive; the resources we avail ourselves of in attempting or performing anything.

(Galatians 5:25 ESV) If we **live by the Spirit**, let us **also keep in step with the Spirit**.

1. THE SPIRIT DIRECTS AND DEFINES OUR WORLD.

Walking by the Spirit, we live by the Spirit, so we keep in step with the Spirit.

- This means that we live as people who have been freed and are being transformed.
- This means that we live in a world that is directed and defined by the Spirit of God through word of God.
- This means that the Holy Spirit is now our ethical and moral guide.

***What does it mean that the Spirit is now our ethical and moral guide? That the Spirit of God will teach us and direct us by the Word of God. The

leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit will never be apart from or contrary to the written word.

***Ultimately, the science of **ethics** is concerned with **what is right**, and **morality** is concerned with **what is accepted**. In most societies, when something is accepted, it is judged to be right. But oftentimes, this provokes a crisis for the Christian. When the normal becomes the normative, when **what is** determines **what ought to be**, we may as Christians find ourselves swimming hard against the cultural current.

D. This means that the Spirit will always direct us to live in obedience to God’s word, but this is much more than a mere mechanical or habitual or routine obedience.

***As David Benner says: God does not ask for resignation based on acquiescence in the absence of a better option. Nor does God ask for reluctant, grudging submission. **What God wants is surrender based on love and trust ... God invites us to abandon our neurotic displays of self-sufficiency.** He invites us to surrender our stolen independence and exchange it for a willingly accepted dependence. God takes our humble offering of powerlessness and turns it into a voluntary subordination—a freely chosen laying down our life that leads to our transformation and fulfillment. [Benner, D. G. (2005). *Desiring God’s will*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.]

(Galatians 5:16–17 ESV) But I say, **walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.** For the desires of the flesh are against the

Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to **keep you from doing the things you want to do.**

2. THE SPIRIT CARES FOR US AND FULFILLS OUR DEEPEST NEEDS AND DESIRES.

A. We no longer have to fend for ourselves. We are freed from a lifestyle in which we were left to ourselves to find joy and satisfaction. Walking by the Spirit we are able to do the things we truly want to do.

(Psalm 37:4 ESV) Delight yourself in the LORD, **and he will give you the desires of your heart.**

B. Our pursuit of pure joy, significance and fulfillment is no longer thwarted by and misdirected by our natural desires.

C. Our pursuit of pure joy, significance and fulfillment is no longer directed and defined by the constraints of the natural realm of mere humans.

EXAMPLE #1—PEACE: CHRIST GIVES US PEACE THAT IS BEYOND THE ABILITY AND COMPREHENSION OF THIS WORLD.

(John 14:27 ESV) Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. **Not as the world gives do I give to you.** Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

(Philippians 4:7 ESV) **And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

EXAMPLE #2—PROTECTION: OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD “IN CHRIST” IS BEYOND THE REACH OF THIS WORLD.

In Christ, “God is for us” and has forged a bond of love that makes us **inseparable** from God and **conquerors** over any conceivable enemy. We are **ultimately untouchable** from any separation or defeat, **even from any charge or condemnation brought against us.**

(Romans 8:31–39 ESV) What then shall we say

to these things? **If God is for us, who can be against us?** 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 **Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect?** It is God who justifies. 34 **Who is to condemn?** ... **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” 37 **No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.** 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, **nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Clearly the Bible describes our relationship “in Christ” as beyond the reach of anything in this world or beyond.

(Galatians 5:22–23 ESV) 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

3. THE SPIRIT PRODUCES HIS FRUIT IN OUR LIVES.

Walking by the Spirit, the Spirit directs and defines our new lives and produces the work of God in our lives—aka, the fruit of the Spirit: Love, joy ...

