

# Make Disciples 4

MAKE DISCIPLES

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MAKE DISCIPLES

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## MAKE DISCIPLES 4 DISCIPLESHIP A WAR TO THE DEATH!

Paul's famous declaration in Galatians 2:20 speaks of a similar truth he later commands his readers to experience in Galatians 5:16...

Galatians 2:20 (note) "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

**Comment by M D Dunnam on Galatians 2:20** - "Not only Paul, but countless Christians witness to the fact that the Holy Spirit can become so real that the Spirit is a far more intimate part of our being than some dimensions of the flesh. This is what happened to Paul (Gal. 2:20). Paul is urging the Galatians to remember that, as Christians, they have received the Spirit and they are to walk in the Spirit. The Spirit is the supreme energizing and regulative force in their lives. If they walk in the Spirit, there is no danger that their Christian liberty will become an opportunity for the flesh (**Ed**: "License"). (The Preacher's Commentary Series, Volume 31 : Galatians)

**Galatians 2:20 is the MEMORY VERSE FOR NEXT WEEK**

**Hint:** Any word in in these notes which is in **bright blue** signifies a link to additional information.

### LET'S UNPACK GALATIANS 2:20...

**(1) CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST – When was Paul crucified with Christ?** At the same time you and I were crucified with Christ as Paul describes in Romans 6...

**Romans 6:6** (note) - "Knowing (ginosko - knowing by experience) this, that our old self (= "old man" = all that we were in Adam before salvation) was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with (made inoperative or ineffective, but NOT annihilated), that we should no longer be slaves to (the) sin

**Comment:** So in this passage we see that all we were in Adam was put to death on the cross, but there remains a residual effect in the form of the sin which still inhabits our body. So while we are no longer slaves to sin, we still possess this entity called "the sin" and it works incessantly to try to entice us to commit sins. It does this primarily by stirring up evil desires (lusts) in our heart and this is where we need to learn to lean on the Holy Spirit as discussed below in Gal 5:16.

Stated another the body of sin's power has been once and for all made ineffective and deprived of its force. But please do not misunderstand -- the Sin principle or fallen flesh is not destroyed or annihilated. The Sin principle is still present in our physical body and this truth explains the ongoing war between the flesh and the spirit (Gal 5:17). This understanding of "made ineffective" also explains why saints are commanded to not let sin reign in our mortal bodies, which of course implies that the Sin principle can raise its ugly head and attempt to usurp the throne.

**Body of sin** - This refers to our physical bodies as the instrument of sin or "the sin" (see below) which is regarded as an organized power, acting through the members of the body. Yes it is "done away with" or as the NET Bible renders it that it "would no longer dominate us." Prior to our co-crucifixion, the sin dominated us.

The fact that we are crucified with Christ provides the foundation for Christ to give us His Spirit by Whom we now are enabled to live a supernatural life, the life described in Galatians 2:20 and Galatians 5:16, 18! **Webster** defines **supernatural** as "of or relating to an order of existence beyond the visible observable universe; being beyond or exceeding the powers or laws of nature; miraculous; departing from what is usual or normal." **Beloved, does supra-normal describe your (my) Christian life, a life which is "not produced according to the ordinary or established laws of natural things?"** It should. And it can. As we lay hold of the truths of the Spirit (see "**FAITH**" below), **supernatural** can become our "**normal Christian life!**"

**How can we picture sin rendered powerless in Romans 6:6?** Consider the effect of gravity on a book. Gravity would cause an unsupported book to fall, but gravity can be rendered "powerless" against the book by simply placing a table under it. As long as the table is under the book, gravity cannot cause it to fall. Of course gravity has not really lost its power nor is it no longer present. It is just that the table is "stronger" than gravity's effect on the book. For the Christian, the **Holy Spirit** is like that table and our **sin nature** (flesh) is like gravity's pull. As long as we allow the Holy Spirit to "hold us up," which places our dependence on His power to give us victory over sin, our sinful impulses have no power to pull us down (Gal 5:16).

**Romans 6:11**(note) - Even so **consider** yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

**Comment:** **Consider** is **present imperative** calling for us to continually **consider** the great truth - we are **dead** to the power of sin and **alive** to God, all because we are now in Christ Jesus. When we were born, we were like all men and women, born into Adam. We "inherited" Adam's fatal "virus" - the **Sin principle**. But when we believed in Christ and became new creatures in Christ, the old things passed away (spiritual death) and new things came, specifically spiritual life in Christ (2Cor 5:17-note).

Note that the verb **consider** (*logizomai*) was used in the secular Greek world as an accounting term, like adding up a column of numbers and coming up with the sum. So what Paul is commanding us to do is to "add up" the truths of the previous 10 verses in Romans 6 (read Ro 6:1-10) which is summed up as our being dead to sin and alive to God. Paul is calling for us to frequently meditate on the great spiritual transaction that has taken place in Romans 6:1-10.

It is worth noting that in Romans 6 every use of the word "**sin**" is preceded in Greek by the definite article ("the"), so that Paul is referring to "the sin" as an entity, the **Sin principle**, which he personifies both as a "king" who wants to reign (Ro 6:12-note) or as a slave master who wants to rule (Ro 6:17-note). In other words the Sin principle that lives in our physical frame is the evil force that incessantly tempts us to commit sins. Does that make sense?

**Romans 6:12-14** (note) - Therefore **do not let** (the) sin **reign** (this is a **present imperative** = remember we cannot keep ANY command without reliance on the enabling power of the Spirit) in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts (thus "the sin" is still **IN** the believer and has a strong desire to rule over us even as it did before Christ assumed the throne of our heart), 13 and **do not go on presenting** (**present imperative** = the only way to obey this command continually is to walk by the Spirit continually - Gal 5:16) the members of your body to (the) sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For (the) sin shall not be master over you (The Sin is the slave master of every non-believer), for you are not under (subject to) law, but under (to be "under" something is to be under its power or sway) grace.

**Romans 6:17-18** (note) - But thanks be to God that though you were **slaves of** (the) **sin**, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and having been freed from sin (repeats what he said in Ro 6:11), you became **slaves of righteousness**.

**Comment:** We will be talking about **freedom** today, but notice the paradox - we are free and yet we are slaves! But now instead of our former state as slaves to Sin, now we are slaves to God.

In summary in Ro 6:6-note we **Know**, in Ro 6:11-note we are to **Consider** and in Ro 6:12-13-note we are to **Present** our bodies (cp Ro 12:1-2-note).

**CHRIST LIVES IN ME – What is Paul saying?** While we know that in one sense Christ is in every believer (Col 1:27b-note), we also know that Christ is presently seated at the right hand of the Father (Col 3:1-note, Heb 12:2-note). In addition we know that before Christ ascended to take His seat in glory, He promised to send us a "**Helper**" (*parakletos* = an "Enabler" if you will), the Holy Spirit (Jn 15:26). Every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit Who is sent from Jesus and is called "the Spirit of Christ" (Ro 8:9-note; 1Pet 1:11-note). His Name "Spirit of Christ" (also "Spirit of Jesus" = Acts 16:7, "Spirit of Jesus Christ"- Phil 1:19-note) signifies that He is Jesus' representative, or in a sense Christ's "**CEO**"! So while the Father is the Source and Jesus is the Foundation, the Spirit is the Agent of dispensing grace (transforming power) which every believer needs to live the "Christ life," the "Galatians 2:20 life!"

**Comment:** The great Puritan writer **John Owen** explains that although grace is found in Jesus (cp Jn 1:14-note, Jn 1:16-note, 2Ti 2:1-note, 2Cor 12:9-note) the "dispensing Agent" of His amazing grace is the Spirit of Jesus. **Owen** writes "Everything God does He does as the triune God. Each Person of the Trinity is involved in every action of God. Yet at the same time each Person has a special role to fulfill in that work... There is no good that we receive from God but it is brought to us and wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. Nor is there in us any good towards God, any faith, love, obedience to His will, but what we are enabled (**Ed**: Note not "helped"

which implies we have some ability and just need a little "push"! to do so by the Holy Spirit." (Quoted by Jerry Bridges in the Bookends of the Christian Life) (FYI: Owen's original work is [Pneumatologia, Or, A Discourse Concerning the Holy Spirit](#))

**FAITH** (pistis) – **What is faith?** In a previous lesson we described FAITH using the theologically accurate acrostic **F.A.I.T.H.** or "Forsaking **All I Trust Him.**" Faith can also be described as "**R&R**" which stands for **Renouncing** and **Relying**. We are to renounce self-reliance and rely on Spirit's sufficiency! Paul is saying that he (and we) walked by faith not sight, relying wholly on the Holy Spirit.

**FLESH** (sarx) – This noun has several senses in the NT, and here in Galatians 2:20, Paul describes our physical flesh (flesh and blood). More often **flesh** is used with its moral/ethical meaning. The way to determine the meaning is to examine the **context** which is "king" in the realm of accurate interpretation! The moral/ethical use of **flesh** describes our depraved nature which we all inherited from Adam (Ro 5:12-note), and which is interminably hostile to God and unremittably selfish. Flesh has been called by someone "anti-God energy." Flesh minus the **h** and then spelled backwards is SELF! Note also that the middle letter of sln is "l." As alluded to above, the fallen flesh is unredeemed and cannot be improved, but will remain intransigently arrayed against God and everything He stand for.

**Tony Evans** quips that our fallen flesh "is like the structure of a house that has been eaten up by termites. You can paint the inside, put down new carpet, and buy new furniture, but you have not fixed the structural problem. **The flesh is like a bad in-law; you can't get rid of it. It just keeps hanging around...** "There isn't one good thing in my flesh" is Paul's answer in Romans 7:18. So you may as well mark it down. There is nothing of value to God in your flesh. Your old address has been condemned. That's why it must die. God doesn't want it in heaven, and you can't fix it here on earth. Now if you don't understand this, you are going to waste your time trying to improve your flesh, whether through New Year's resolutions or by sheer effort, gritting your teeth and giving it your best shot. It's true you may be able to make a few minor improvements that way. The authority to do what we're talking about, however, doesn't come from you. It comes from the authority of the Holy Spirit in you. But a lot of us are like lion tamers, trying to whip the flesh into shape. It cannot be done. The flesh is totally diseased. It attracts sin like a magnet. Sin appeals to the flesh because sin pleases the flesh. The thing that makes the flesh so bad is that it seeks to serve and please self rather than serve and please God. But your new inner person seeks to please God." (The Promise : Experiencing God's Greatest Gift, the Holy Spirit)

**John Piper** has an excellent "working definition" on the **flesh** as "the old ego that is self-reliant and does not delight to yield to any authority or depend on any mercy. It craves the sensation of self-generated power and loves the praise of men... in its conservative form it produces legalism -- keeping rules by its own power for its own glory... we see that the flesh also (in its more liberal form) produces grossly immoral attitudes and acts (described in Gal 5:19-21-note)... The flesh is the proud and unsubmitive root of depravity in every human heart which exalts itself subtly through proud, self-reliant morality, or flaunts itself blatantly through self-assertive, authority-despising immorality." ([Walk by the Spirit](#))

**Let's review - who are our enemies? How do they interact? Please pause to read the passages in parentheses and ponder (then praise God) for how each of our three mortal enemies has been defeated at the Cross of Jesus Christ.**

(1) The **WORLD** (kosmos) – Gal 6:14-note

(2) The **DEVIL** (*diabolos*) – Col 1:13-note

(3) The **FLESH** (sarx - specifically in believers) – Ro 6:6-note

**Excursus on the Devil:** Notice that the word **diabolos** is derived from two words, **dia** = through and **ballo** = throw, so the picture of the name "devil" is one who throws between! This is what he does in marriages and in churches! This has been his "modus operandi" since the beginning, first by raising doubt in our minds as to the veracity of God's Word (Ge 3:1). Notice how after he had tempted Adam to sin, he effectively "drove a wedge" first between God and man (Ge 3:7) and then between the first married couple (Ge 3:8-12)! And he continues to wreak havoc in Christian marriages today. **What is the antidote?** Satan is a liar and the father of lies, to the primary weapon to fight off his attacks is the Word of Truth (cp Eph 6:16 where shield of faith is fortified by Truth = Ro 10:17 and Eph 6:17). Truth repels his main attack of "Hath God truly said?" by which he seeks to create doubt in the power and sufficiency of God's Word. So remember this is not a power struggle but a truth struggle and the battlefield is our mind! I experienced his attempts to "throw between" in my marriage about 10 years after I became a follower of Christ (1984). My wife and I eventually sought help from counselors but it was not until we began an in depth Bible study on Covenant that the Holy Spirit used this truth to bring both of us to our senses and miraculously "resurrect" our marriage. Praise His holy Name and His holy Word! See a

short summary of the power of this truth in the topic **The Covenant of Marriage**.

**SO WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT FLESH?** While our **fallen flesh** is only one of our mortal enemies, in many ways, it is the most dangerous, because it is like the mythical Trojan horse which was taken into the city of Troy allowing the soldiers to unbolt the doors and give the enemy access to the entire city. The flesh is the enemy within the castle walls of our physical bodies. The **world** and the **devil** on the outside of our bodies send messages (thoughts, impressions, etc) to the flesh on the inside.

**Spurgeon describes the traitor within** —A garrison is not free from danger while it has an enemy lodged within. You may bolt all your doors and fasten all your windows; but if the thieves have placed even a little child within doors, who can draw the bolts for them, the house is still unprotected. All the sea outside a ship cannot do it damage till the water enters within and fills the hold. **Hence, it is clear, our greatest danger is from within.** All the devils in hell and tempters on earth could do us no injury if there were **no corruption in our nature**. The sparks will fall harmlessly if there is no tinder. Alas, our heart is our greatest enemy: this is the little home-born thief.

### **HOW DOES FLESH WORK IN TEMPTING US in James 1:14?**

James writes "Let no one say when he is **tempted**, "I am being **tempted** by God"; for God cannot be **tempted** by evil, and He Himself does not **tempt** anyone. But each one is (present tense = continuously) **tempted** when he is (present tense = continuously) **carried away** and (present tense = continuously) **enticed by** his own lust (**epithumia** = strong desire). (James 1:13-14-note)

**Comment:** First notice from where the evil desire originates - "his own (flesh)!" An inside job! We cannot say "The devil made me do it!" As an aside, what is the "key word" in James 1:13-14-note?

Secondly, notice the efficacious evil effect of the temptations emanating from our own flesh: (1) **Temptations carry away** - this Greek verb (exelko) means to draw away, as when an angler drops the line to draw a fish out from the safety of an overhanging rock! and (2) **Temptations entice** (deleazo) which means they allure by the bait on the hook. As **Pastor Steven Cole** says "The fish sees the bait and it lures him toward it, thinking that he will get a meal. Instead, he gets hooked and carried away, where he becomes the meal. The temptation to sin is like that. We think that sin will satisfy us and get us something good that we're missing. But instead, it hooks us and drags us to destruction. There is always that deceptive element to temptation. It is strengthened by the powerful emotions involved."

**C H Spurgeon** wrote - This is the essence of an evil temptation, a man's own lust... This is the wanton harlot that deceives the heart of man: his own desire grown strong and hot till it comes to be lusting: this draws a man away; it baits the hook, and man swallows it and is thus entrapped and enticed.

**Excursus on temptation - Tempted** (in Jas 1:13-14-note) is **peirazo** which is a morally neutral word simply meaning "to test". Whether the test is for a good or evil depends on the intent of the one giving the test and also on the response of the one tested. Satan **tempts** us to bring out the worst in us but God **tests** us to bring out the best. When the scriptural context clearly indicates the test is an enticement to evil, **peirazo** is translated tempt, which carries that negative connotation, as in James 1:13-14.

Notice that James does not blame parents, spouses, jobs, kids, etc. He doesn't label it as a disease or a dysfunction. He doesn't even blame the devil in this section because he wants to be sure we first acknowledge that we are the primary source for temptation. When you get up tomorrow morning and look at your face in the mirror, you are seeing your greatest problem! D L Moody recognized this basic principle quipping that "I have more trouble with D. L. Moody than with any man I know."

**John Piper** - All temptation tests your faith... All testing of your faith is a temptation to forsake the faith. ([The Word of God Abides in You, and You Have Overcome the Evil One](#))

#### **A few quotes on temptation =**

Many people who fly from temptation usually leave a forwarding address.

Never invite temptation—it always accepts.

No one can be caught in a place he does not visit.

There is no merit in abstaining from what one is not tempted to do.

We are never strong enough to risk walking into temptation.

Temptations, like foul weather, come before we send for them. Temptations are everywhere, but so is the grace of God.

If you would master temptation, you must first let Christ master you.

Every temptation is an opportunity to get nearer to God (e.g., see the reward of obedience in Jn 14:21).

It is not a sin to be tempted for even Jesus was tempted (Mt 4:1).

Martin Luther spoke to the unavoidable nature of temptations when he said "You can't keep birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair." The question is this -- "When temptation knocks, who will answer the door so to speak, the Holy Spirit or the fallen flesh?"

**WHY DOES THE BAIT WORK?** Bait keeps us from seeing the consequences. Think of David when tempted by the "bait" of Bathsheba. If only he had known the costly consequences to his own life and family! **Webster** defines **bait** as "Any substance for food, proper to be used or actually used, to catch fish, or other animals, by alluring them to swallow a hook, or to be caught in snares, or in an enclosure or net." David learned the hard way but wrote these poignant words "My eyes are continually toward the LORD, for He will pluck my feet out of the net." (Ps 25:15).

### **WHAT PICTURE DOES PETER GIVE US ABOUT HOW THE FALLEN FLESH OPERATES?**

**1Peter 2:11** (note) Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain (apechomai in the present tense = continuously) from fleshly lusts (lusts of the flesh), which wage war (present tense = continuously) against the soul.

**Observe** - Our responsibility is to continually **abstain**, but we cannot accomplish by gritting our teeth, but by laying hold of the Spirit, relying on His power to give us the desire and the power to abstain. The verb **wages war** is **strateuomai** (present tense = continuously) which personifies our flesh as unremittingly carrying out a "military campaign" against our soul. **Strateuomai** gives us our English words **strategy** and **stratagem** (an artifice or trick in war for deceiving and outwitting the enemy), which speaks volumes at how organized our flesh is in its unremitting war against our soul. There is no furlough for followers of Christ! Our "furlough" is called glory! The Christian life is a continual war, not a casual cake walk! And so Peter gives us another reminder of our continual desperate need for enablement by the Spirit to live a supernatural life that can experience daily victory over fleshly lusts!

## **HINDRANCES TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

### **WHAT ARE THE TWO GREAT HINDRANCES TO OUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH?**

**(1) LEGALISM** - keeping rules, doing works trying to clean up my flesh; e.g., even memorizing Scripture (if you do it with the intent that "you" can overcome a sin by doing religious works!)

Gal 3:2 This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith (Answer to rhetorical question = by faith of course)? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit (born again by faith - justified by faith), are you now being perfected (speaks of progressive sanctification) by the **FLESH** ("anti-God energy")?

We will look at this hindrance in more detail below.

**(2) LICENSE** - turning our freedom into an opportunity for the flesh. **Webster** defines **license** as "freedom that allows or is used with irresponsibility; freedom abused; disregard for standards of personal conduct."

Gal 5:13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your **FREEDOM** into an **OPPORTUNITY** (aphorme) for the **FLESH**, BUT through love **SERVE** (present imperative - a command we can obey only as enabled by the Spirit!) one another. 14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."

Our fallen flesh says "You're free! Go ahead gratify yourself. You can always confess it. You're under grace not law!"

**Aphorme** - Military term = Base for military operations = starting point for an carrying out an attack—and in a general way, an opportunity.

**Remember** - **Real freedom** is not the **right** to do as we wish, but the **power** (provided by the Holy Spirit) to do as we should.

### **Excursus on from what are we FREE?**

- (1) Free from the **GUILT** of sin because we have experienced God's forgiveness. (Col 1:14)
- (2) Free from the **PENALTY** of sin because Christ's death paid the price in full (Jn 19:30)
- (3) Free from the **POWER** of sin thru the Spirit. (Ro 6:6-7)
- (4) Free from the **LAW'S** demands. Christ bore the curse of the Law. (Gal 3:13)
- (5) Free from **DOMINION** (right & might) OF SATAN (Acts 26:18)

**In glory we will be...**

- (6) Free from the **PRESENCE** of Sin (Rev 21:27)
- (7) Free from the **PLEASURE** of Sin (Heb 11:25)

## **PAUL'S ANTIDOTE FOR LEGALISM AND LICENSE**

Galatians 5:16-18

**Dr. Thomas Constable** writes on Galatians 5:16 "This is one of the most important and helpful verses on Christian living in the Bible."

**Dr. John MacArthur** commenting on Gal 5:16 adds that "Since all our problems are caused by the **flesh**, the means by which the **flesh** is overcome is the solution to everything. That is not an oversimplification but the truth according to God's Word."

**Dr. Ray Pritchard** says "This is one of the most important passages on the Christian life in the New Testament. It answers a question all of us have asked at one time or another: Why is it taking me so long to get better? "I thought by now I wouldn't struggle so much with anger. Why is it taking me so long to get better?" "I still get tempted by pornography. Why is it taking me so long to get better?", etc, etc ([Full Speed Ahead One Step at a Time- How You Can Walk in the Spirit Every Day](#))

**Galatians 5:16** (note) - But I say, **WALK** BY THE SPIRIT, and you will not carry out the DESIRE (strong desire, lust) 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. 18 But if you are LED BY THE SPIRIT, you are not under the Law.

**WHAT KIND OF STATEMENT IS Gal 5:16?** CONDITIONAL PROMISE

**WHAT'S THE CONDITION?** Walk by the Spirit = PRESENT IMPERATIVE (The Spirit enables us to obey this command).

**WHAT'S THE PROMISE?** Will not fulfill the desire of the flesh

**WHAT DOES IT NOT SAY?** Does not say we will not have the desire of the flesh. The text just promises that the desires will be effectively countered by the power of the Spirit, so that we do not follow through on the strong urge from the flesh and commit a sin.

**HOW CERTAIN IS THE PROMISE?** Absolutely certain because the words "**will not**" in the Greek are a double negative which is the strongest way to express a negative. When we walk by the Spirit, we **ABSOLUTELY WILL NOT** carry out the desire of the flesh. Surrender to the Spirit is the "secret" of victory over strong temptations that continually bombard our heart and mind.

You are either walking by the Spirit or walking by the flesh. There is no middle ground. So if we are submitting to the Spirit, we cannot gratify the flesh.

Remember we lay hold of this promise not by saying "No" to our flesh, but by saying "Yes" to the Spirit.

**David Platt** - Conquering the flesh does not merely come from theological knowledge. A professor of theology can be addicted to pornography or fly off the handle in rage just the same as a younger believer with little theological knowledge. Growth does not happen because of your ability. Sadly, I have known several gifted ministers who are no longer in ministry because they were not walking by the Spirit. They gave in to various temptations of the flesh (**Ed**: See the checklist of danger signs - Gal 5:19-21-note) and suffered tragic consequences, wrecking themselves and others. Growth does not happen because you attend seminars or read books, as helpful as they may be. God changes us from the inside out through the Spirit (2Cor 3:18-note). We must daily yield to Him so that we do not gratify the desires of the flesh. (Exalting Jesus in Galatians, 2014)

**WHAT'S THE IDEA OF WALK?**

The Greek verb for **walk** (peripateo) is used repeatedly in the NT (especially by Paul) to describe our conduct or way of life.

Remember the prayer we prayed for one another in Colossians 1:9-10? It strikes me that in one sense we were actually praying for each other to be enabled to **walk by the Spirit** ("so that we might **walk** in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects [How better than to walk by the Spirit?], bearing fruit in every good work, increasing in the knowledge of God." Col 1:10-note)

To WALK means to take a series of steps in the same direction over a long period of time. WALKING implies **steady progress** in one direction by means of **deliberate choices** over a long period of time (but in the context of the NT, even those godly choices are enabled by the Spirit. We still choose, but the Spirit gives us the desire and power to choose). Our spiritual progress might not be fast, but should be steady. We **WILL** fall, but we need to get up, confess and press on.

And so to walk by the Spirit is to continually renounce self-reliance and to continually rely on the Spirit's power! Picture a man who needs a CANE to walk. He walks by that cane and relies on it. So too we are to walk by the Spirit. Think about getting up in AM, reading a sensual novel vs reading the pure Word. Who is likely to succeed in walking by the Spirit? That is an absurd example, but it does make the point that there are some spiritual disciplines we can do (as long as we do them motivated and empowered by the Spirit, and not with the idea that we merit God's favor) to assure that will leave the house in the morning walking by the Spirit. For example, how is your "Quiet Time?" Is it too quiet? See **Quiet Time: 7 Minutes with God** to jumpstart your quiet time. See also an article I wrote entitled [Thoughts on the "Quiet Time](#)

**David Platt** on **peripateo** - In the days of Aristotle, his students were known as *peripatetics* because of their habit of following their teacher around. For the Christian, to **walk by the Spirit**, or to **be led by the Spirit**, means to follow our Teacher around. We must listen to the Spirit's Word, discern His will, and follow His guidance. This is not a deeper life or higher life; this is the normal Christian life. We should **note the tension here between God's divine power and the believer's human choice** (Schreiner, Galatians, 343). Christians must decide to walk by the Spirit continually, and at the same time the Spirit is at work to create new appetites and give new power to resist the flesh and to please God.

**S Lewis Johnson** writes that "if you want to know how to walk by the Spirit, study walking. Have you ever noticed how babies learn to walk? They don't theorize, they don't sit in their high chair and look and see father and analyze what he's doing. You won't find any child who said, "Walking is rather easy, I've analyzed it philosophically. What you do is you put one foot out, transfer your weight to that foot, then move the next foot out, transfer your weight to that foot. Keeping them apart so that you have good balance."... This happens over a period of time. Finally he can walk, but of course he never reaches the place where he cannot fall... he learned to walk by walking... That's the way we learn to walk by the Spirit, by walking. It's to wake up in the morning and say, "Lord, this is your day, I want to walk by the Spirit. Give me some indication of what your will is for me today." It's expressed in the word of God. Lord, I'm going with the help of the Holy Spirit to trust the Word of God today... through the process of listening for the Spirit's guidance, for His leading, as He leads and directs you, you will come to understand what it is to walk by the Spirit and (thereby) you shall no longer fulfill the lusts of the flesh. And you shall have the joy and happiness of which the apostle speaks when he says, "Brethren, you were called to freedom (eleutheria)." (Gal 5:13) The freedom to be under the Holy Spirit and no longer under Moses code, I commend to you this way, for... it is the way of life, the way of joy. ([Ref](#))

### **WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT IF WE FAIL TO WALK BY THE SPIRIT?**

We will very likely carry out the desire of the flesh, because we cannot resist in our own strength!

### **WHO IS RESPONSIBLE TO WALK BY THE SPIRIT?**

WE are BUT the Spirit gives us the desire and the power (Phil 2:13NLT)

We are 100% responsible and at the same time 100% dependent on the Spirit! We will discuss this spiritual dynamic more next week.

**WHY IS THE ORDER SIGNIFICANT?** In other words can we say "I won't fulfill the desire of my flesh and by so doing I will be walking by the Spirit?"

**WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT LINE OF REASONING?** Inverted Paul's order!

Let's take a silly example - What if I tell you "Don't think of a PURPLE ELEPHANT!" What is your natural reaction? You cannot stop thinking about the pink elephant! Now I set before a hot fudge sundae – the thoughts of the elephant vanish because your mind (and desire) is captivated by a new affection! This is an illustration of the **EXPULSIVE POWER OF A NEW AFFECTION** (see [Thomas Chalmers' sermon](#)) – So when we focus on the Spirit of Jesus Christ first and say YES to His guiding, the "purple elephant" temptations lose their attraction. They may still be present, but the Spirit enables us to not act on them. Or as the hymn writer H. H. Lemmel said "Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face, The things of this earth grow strangely dim, in the light of

His glory and grace!" ([Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus](#)) Amen!

Here is a quote from a sermon by **Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones** in which he is describing how believers are to put on the new and put off the old. He writes "**Indeed, as I have already said, you cannot truly deal with the negative unless you are at the same time doing the positive.** (AMEN TO THAT - NOTICE THE ORDER - Col 3:1-4+ MUST BE "PUT ON" BEFORE YOU CAN EFFECTIVELY KILL SIN in Col 3:5+. IN Gal 5:16+ YOU ARE TO FIRST WALK BY THE SPIRIT AND THEN AND ONLY THEN WILL YOU BE ENABLED TO NOT CARRY OUT THE DEEDS OF THE FLESH! OUR FALLEN FLESH TRIES TO INVERT THE ORDER AND THE RESULT IS INVARIABLY FAILURE TO KILL SIN! IN Ro 8:13+ IT IS BY THE SPIRIT YOU PUT TO DEATH THE DEEDS OF THE BODY!) **The way to get rid of the defects is to cultivate the virtues.** To use a well-known phrase of Thomas Chalmers, what we need is to apply the "[The Expulsive Power of a New Affection](#)". I use a simple illustration. The way the dead leaves of winter are removed from some trees is not that people go around plucking them off; no, it is the new life, the shoot that comes and pushes off the dead in order to make room for itself. In the same way the Christian gets rid of all such things as bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and evil speaking and all malice. The new qualities develop and the others simply have no room; they are pushed out and they are pushed off.

Paul's version of the cure for "purple elephant thoughts" is Phil 4:8 (note) - "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, **let your mind dwell** (present imperative - command to make this our habitual practice. Greek verb **logizomai** calls for us to think about something in a detailed and logical manner) on these things."**How better to fulfill Paul's command then by practicing (under grace not law) the spiritual discipline of Meditation?** (Cf "*profitable*" in 1Ti 4:7-8-note) In his Christian classic "Knowing God" J. I. Packer J. I. Packer says that meditation is the practice of turning each truth we learn about God into matter for reflection before God, leading to prayer and praise to God adding that "Meditation is the activity of calling to mind, and thinking over, and dwelling on, and applying to oneself, the various things that one knows about the works and ways and purposes and promises of God... It is an activity of holy thought, consciously performed in the presence of God, under the eye of God, by the help of God, as a means of communion with God." Such saturation with the Scriptures is the secret to satisfaction in the soul and in essence activates the "expulsive power of a new affection."

**Rob Morgan** - I had a professor once, Otis Braswell, who talked about Galatians 5:16 one day in class, and he made an interesting comment. He said that many Christians read this verse backward. They think that if they are not fulfilling the lust of the flesh, they can walk in the Spirit. And so they try with all their might to overcome their addictions and lusts, and they try to do it in their own energy. They turn over a new leaf. They make a new resolution. But we can never overcome our besetting sins by ourselves.

**When we begin our day  
by surrendering to Jesus and His Spirit,  
we are much less likely to surrender  
to the world, the flesh, or the devil  
when their temptations attack us!**

### **THE SUBTLE TRAP OF LEGALISM**

Earlier we discussed the two major hindrances to our spiritual growth. I think the more subtle and pervasive one is legalism. And when we try to obey Galatians 5:16 by corralling our flesh with a list of do's and don'ts, vows, regulations, etc, we have effectively placed ourselves under a form of legalism. So what is the result when place ourselves under some law? Below are three passages which teach us what will transpire...

#### **WHAT IS THE POWER OF THE LAW?**

**1) Romans 7:5** (note) "For while we were in the flesh, the SINFUL PASSIONS, which were AROUSED BY THE LAW, were at work (energeo in the imperfect tense = repeatedly "energizing") in the members of our body to bear fruit for death."

**What is the effect of the Law on the fallen flesh?** Sinful passions (evil desires) that live in our mortal bodies and have their seat in the fallen flesh are aroused by the law.

**ILLUSTRATION** - The **Flagship Hotel in Galveston** is built right on the water. Large plate-glass windows adorn the dining room, which is on the lowest floor. However, the windows kept getting broken by guests



fishing from the balconies above. Heavy sinkers had to be used to cast to the water, but the lines were often too short and so they would crash against the windows below. Finally, the management removed the "**NO FISHING FROM BALCONY**" signs from the rooms. The windows were safe at last because the people stopped fishing. The law to not fish stirred their flesh to rebel and fish from their rooms. Without the sign stating no fishing, there was nothing to disobey. The flesh is stirred into action by the law! If we try to not gratify our flesh, we will end us stirring up the flesh. Surrender to the Spirit and He (and He alone) will demolish (at least for the moment) the strong desires of our flesh.

**2) Romans 7:8, 11** But sin, taking (seizing = ESV, NET) opportunity (aphorme) through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead... for sin, taking an opportunity (aphorme) through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

Here's the **New Living Translation** (a paraphrase but generally a good one) - "But **sin** used this **command** to arouse all kinds of covetous **desires** within me! If there were no law, sin would not have that power... Sin took advantage of those commands and deceived me; it used the commands to kill me."

### What's the effect of the commandment?

Our sin nature (yes, it is crucified [Ro 6:6], but although dormant it is ever able to be stirred up) The commandment arouses covetous desires. Sin is deceptive and loves to use the law to trip us up! What's the message? Don't make a list of do's and don'ts to seek to be holy! Don't vow to God "I'll never commit that sin again!" Promise Him you will reject self improvement and seek Spirit enablement! Walk by the Spirit. He alone can tread down the covetous desires of the flesh!

**Comment: Aphorme** describes a base camp from which an army could launch its military campaign. Figuratively in Romans 7:8, 11, **aphorme** describes the law functioning like a "*fulcrum for the energy of the evil principle.*" In other words sin uses the law as a base of operations from which it launches spiritual attacks on our heart and mind and will.

To summarize, be careful of falling into the trap of saying things like "**I won't do** \_\_\_\_\_ **again!**" You have just placed yourself back under the Law and the **flesh** with its sinful passions will be aroused.

**ILLUSTRATION FROM PILGRIM'S PROGRESS** - In Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan describes Interpreter's house, which Pilgrim entered during the course of his journey to the Celestial City. The parlor of the house was completely covered with dust, and when a man took a broom and started to sweep, he and the others in the room began to choke from the great clouds of dust that were stirred up. The more vigorously he swept, the more suffocating the dust became. Then Interpreter ordered a maid to sprinkle the room with water, with which the dust was quickly washed away. Interpreter explained to Pilgrim that the parlor represented the heart of an unsaved man, that the dust was original sin, the man with the broom was the law, and the maid with the water was the gospel. His point was that all the law can do with sin is to stir it up. Only the gospel of Jesus Christ can wash it away.

**(3) 1 Corinthians 15:55-58** - O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord."

**What is the power of sin?** The law.

**Why?** As we have seen, the law stirs up or arouses sin to bear fruit for death.

**Illustration** - Take a dish of Baking Soda (explaining that it represents our Sin nature). It appears quiet until another substance is added. Add Vinegar (explaining that it represents the Law). What's the result? The Baking Soda is no longer quiet but begins to smoke and froth. The fault is not in the vinegar ("the law"), but in the intrinsic nature of the Baking Soda which will not remain inactive when "provoked" by Vinegar. The Law is not at fault, but the fault lies in our evil, wicked Sin nature!

## WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT OUR STRUGGLE WITH THE FLESH?

### Galatians 5:17-18

**Galatians 5:17** (note) - For the **FLESH** SETS ITS DESIRE (present tense = continually) against the SPIRIT, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these ARE IN OPPOSITION (present tense = continually, face to face = antikeimai) to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

**This war will last until death!** We will continually have strong sinful desires assaulting our heart and mind. Our daily fight will be to choose (but even that choice is enabled by the Spirit) to WHOM we will yield - to the Spirit or to the Flesh? While we can't overcome sin TOTALLY in this life, by walking in the Spirit we can overcome sin as a PATTERN of life. And we can praise God for every victory!

**ILLUSTRATION OF INCESSANT WAR BETWEEN FLESH & SPIRIT:** Jerome (ca 347-420 AD) an "early church father", translator of Latin Vulgate (contemporary of Augustine) MOVED TO DESERT TO ESCAPE WORLDLY TEMPTATIONS - days were hot , nights were cold - "O how often, I imagined that I was in the midst of the pleasures of Rome when I was stationed in the desert, in that solitary wasteland which is so burned up by the heat of the sun that it provides a dreadful habitation for the monks! I, who because of the fear of hell had condemned myself to such a hell and who had nothing but scorpions and wild animals for company, often thought that I was dancing in a chorus with girls. My face was pale from fasting, but my mind burned with passionate desires within my freezing body; and the fires of sex seethed, even though the flesh had already died in me as a man." (He's referring to Romans 6)

**William MacDonald** has an interesting thought on **why do we have this unceasing spiritual conflict** - "God could have removed the fleshly nature from believers at the time of their conversion, but He did not choose to do so. Why? He wanted to keep them continually reminded of their own weakness; to keep them continually dependent on Christ, their Priest and Advocate; and to cause them to praise unceasingly the One who saved such worms. Instead of removing the old nature, God gave us His own Holy Spirit to indwell us. God's Spirit and our flesh are perpetually at war, and will continue to be at war until we are taken home to heaven. The believer's part in the conflict is to yield to the Spirit." (Believer's Bible Commentary)

**Galatians 5:18** (note) - "But IF (translate "since" - in other words this is true of us as believers) you ARE (present tense and passive voice = being continuously) LED by the Spirit, you are not under (subject to, under the dominion of) the Law."

**John Piper** on "**being led by the Spirit**" points out that by using "the passive voice (being led) he emphasizes the Spirit's work, not ours. The Spirit is not a leader like the pace car in the "Daytona 500." He is a Leader like a locomotive on a train. We do not follow in our strength. We are led by His power. So "walk by the Spirit" means stay hooked up to the divine source of power and go wherever He leads." ([The War Within- Flesh Vs. Spirit](#))

You are not **under the Law**, not under the power or control of the Law. This verse does not mean that you have *freedom to sin*, but a *freedom from sin*. You have new desires and new power to please God by bearing the fruit of the Spirit. Do not live under the crushing weight of the law, but live by the dynamic power of the Spirit.

Run and work the **Law** commands  
But gives me neither feet or hands.  
A sweeter sound the **Gospel** brings;  
It bids me fly and gives me wings.

## HOW CAN WE KNOW WHETHER WE ARE WALKING BY THE SPIRIT?

Paul gives us a SPIRITUAL/MORAL CHECKLIST in the following passages - Gal 5:19-21 (natural deeds) and Gal 5:22-23 (supernatural fruit).

**Notice the phrase in Galatians 5:19** (note) - "Now the deeds of the flesh are **evident**. (Gk = phanerós from verb phaino = to shine forth!)" Paul is saying that when we fail to walk by the Spirit, the rotten deeds will be "shine forth" and it will be obvious to us and to others we are NOT walking in the Spirit!

**What does Paul mean by the statement in Galatians 5:21** (note) "**that those who practice** (present tense) **such things will not inherit the kingdom of God**"?

Paul is saying that if the **deeds of the flesh** are what a person clearly sees in their life day in and day out, they are **not born again**. Stated another way, they do not have the Holy Spirit Who enables them to not fulfill the desire of the flesh. **BE AWARE** (and "beware) that there are some evangelical expositors who teach Paul is saying these individuals are born again but that they will lose their "rewards" in the coming Millennium. This is not what Paul is teaching and is dangerous because it gives a false sense of security to those who are wantonly sinning and have no evidence of the fruit of the Spirit! Jesus clearly warned about this deadly deception in Mt 7:21-23 (note) (where the phrase "practice lawlessness" is in the present tense)!

The way to achieve this **self-control** is to place ourselves under the Holy Spirit's control. In Galatians 5:16, the apostle Paul admonished, "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." And according to Gal 5:23, the fruit of the Spirit includes

self-control.

If there are sinful excesses in our lives we need to lose "weight" by submitting ourselves to the Spirit's control and thereby exercising self-control.

### To summarize the evidence that we are walking by the Spirit...

The deeds of the flesh should be being "checked off" less and the the fruit of the Spirit should be checked off more and more. Ultimately as we look at the fruit of the Spirit, it becomes obvious that these were perfectly fulfilled in only one Man, our Lord Jesus. But as we grow in grace and the knowledge of Him, we will be transformed from glory to glory into His image. And that is the goal of walking by the Spirit - Christ-likeness!

**In conclusion, what does it mean practically to walk by the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit?** We can know we are trusting and yielding to this truth when we experience the temptation but we are enabled by the Spirit to not follow through. Is it mysterious? Absolutely! From Phil 2:13 we can understand that He gives us the desire and the power not to carry out the sin that we are being tempted by our flesh to carry out! We are walking by the power of the Spirit. When the strong temptation comes and we give in and sin, it is quite clear that we are not walking by the Spirit. Before we were believers and received the Spirit, we had no power to not follow through on a temptation. Oh, we could gut it up for a while but eventually we would capitulate. Now when we walk by the Spirit, renouncing self reliance and relying on His work in us, we can say "No" to the temptation.

And remember that walking by the Spirit is not about **PERFECTION**, but it is about **DIRECTION**.

## WALKING BY THE SPIRIT by William Newell

When we announce that the Scripture teaching is that walking by the Holy Spirit has taken the place of walking under the rule of the Mosaic law, there remains to be examined, and that most carefully, just what walking by the Spirit means.

1. It does not mean to desert the use of our faculties of moral perception or of moral judgment.

Although there doubtless are occasions in which the believer, **being filled with the Spirit**, acts in a wholly unanticipated way; and although there may be times when he will be carried quite out of himself in ecstasies of joy or love; and although the believer **walking by the Spirit** will normally be conscious of the almighty power within, of triumph over the world and the flesh: nevertheless the feet of the believer will never be swept from the path of conscious moral determination. He will always know that so far as decisions of moral matters are concerned, he has still the sense of moral accountability, or, perhaps better, **responsibility**. The believer's own conscience will protest against any such letting go of himself as has been unfortunately found throughout Church history when people have submitted themselves to such ecstatic states that moral judgment and self-control were cast to the winds. (**Ed:** E.g., the false teaching of the phrase "Let go, let God!")

We do indeed read of most remarkable experiences and that in deeply approved saints, in which their spirits were overwhelmed by the vision of Divine things, and we must adduce that in such experiences they were rapt and ecstatic; but never to the losing of that self-control which, we read in Galatians 5:22-note, is a fruit of the Spirit. Even in the- exercise of the gifts spoken of by the apostle in 1 Corinthians 12 to 14, it is definitely declared, "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."

It is in the abandonment of the sense of moral responsibility into unscriptural surrender of the mental and spiritual faculties, -into other control than self-control directed by the Holy Spirit, that such awful extravagances have occurred in Church history.

**2. To be led by the Spirit does indeed involve the surrender of our wills to God.** But God, on His side, does not crush into fatalistic abandon those very faculties with which He has endowed men. On the contrary, the surrendered saint immediately finds His faculties marvelously quickened, his faculties both of mind and of sensibility. All the powers of his soul-life (which include his intellect, tastes, feelings, emotions, and recollective memory) are renewed. His will being yielded to God, God now "works in Him to will" as well as "to do of His good pleasure" (Phil 2:13)-in which the surrendered saint rejoices.

But while it is indeed God Who works in us even to will, yet it is true that walking in the Spirit is still our own choice: "If ye by the Spirit put to death the doings of the body"- we read. The Holy Spirit is infinitely ready, but God leads rather than compels.

The great lesson which each of us must lay to his own heart is that those in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, are not under law as a principle, but under grace, full, accomplished Divine favor, that favor shown by God to Christ! And the life of the believer now is (1) **in faith, not effort:** as Paul speaks in Gal 2:20: "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of

God" (and) (2) **in the power of the indwelling Spirit** for walking by the Spirit has taken the place of walking by external commandments ([Newell, William: Romans 8: Expository Notes Verse by Verse](#))

## SOME CLOSING ILLUSTRATIONS

**ILLUSTRATION - A LESSON FROM THE OAK TREE** - Have you ever noticed that in winter some oak trees retain crisp, dry leaves long after the maples, the elms, and the walnuts have become bare skeletons? Even the strong winter winds and the early spring rains do not strip the oak branches completely. But as springtime progresses, something wonderful happens. Tiny little buds start appearing at the tips of the twigs, pushing off the dried remnants of the preceding season. What the winds and rain could not do from without, the forces of new life do from within.

At times, old habits cling to our lives with the same tenacity as those oak leaves. Even the winds of trial and suffering do not remove all the lifeless leftovers of our fallen human nature. But Christ, who dwells in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, is at work. His life within us continually seeks to push off the old habits, renewing us when we confess our sins, steadying us when

we falter, and strengthening us to do His will.

When every effort to cast off an old sinful habit ends in failure, remember the mighty oak. Thank God for His Spirit who lives in you. Keep saying yes to His gentle urging to be kind, loving, honest, strong, and faithful. He'll push off those "lifeless old leaves." Dennis J. De Haan

When stubborn sins tenaciously  
Hold to their former place,  
We must rely on Jesus' strength  
And His unfailing grace.  
--Sper

**The best way to get rid of a bad habit  
is to start a good habit-- rely on God.**

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**ILLUSTRATION - Old Flesh Nature** - Several years ago we had a pet raccoon we called Jason. For hours he would entertain us by wrestling with our dog, MacTavish, a kind and gentle Scottish terrier. Jason, on the other hand, was a kind of schizoid terror. One minute he would snuggle up on your lap like a perfect angel and the next he'd be engaged in the most fiendish antics. If unrestrained, he would breakfast on dove eggs, raid the garbage can, or tear up the flowerbed. Although he was a delightful pet, we became increasingly aware that his destructive actions were governed by his wild instincts. Jason would always have the nature of a raccoon, and we had to watch him closely no matter how tame he seemed to be.

Often when I observed Jason's behavior, I thought of the fallen, sinful nature that we as Christians retain even though we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Paul referred to this as the "flesh" in which "nothing good dwells" (Ro 7:18). It may be repressed and restrained, but it is always there. Unless we are daily controlled by the Lord, our old "self" will demonstrate its destructive, pleasure-seeking capacity in some way or another.

Although we are new creatures in Christ, we still possess a tendency to sin. But we need not be governed by it, for we are united to Christ and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. By obeying God's Word and yielding to the Spirit, we can be victorious over the flesh—the "nature of the beast" within. —M. R. De Haan II

The secret of self-control  
is to give control of ourselves to God.

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FARMER Johnson smiled as he strolled out of the hardware store with a new chainsaw guaranteed to cut five big oak trees an hour. Twenty-four hours later, however, his smile was gone. With obvious frustration, Johnson was back at the store complaining that the saw would never cut five trees an hour. "Why, it only cut five trees all day long!" he said.

Puzzled, the store owner took the saw outside, gave the cord a rip, and fired up the steel-toothed beast. The deafening roar of the saw startled Johnson so badly that he stumbled trying to get away. "What's that noise?" he gasped.

Johnson's attempt to cut down trees without starting the chainsaw is like our foolishness when we try to do the work of Christ in our own strength. We get frustrated and spiritually exhausted when we try to make life work on our terms and by our schedule.

The spirit of Christ, who lives within all believers (Ro 8:9, 10, 11-note), often seems silent when we try to live by our own strength. Yet His presence can become real and powerful when we trust Him for the life we cannot live. —M R De Haan II