



WALK IN THE SPIRIT



- If we were to take a survey on how people define the phrase, “Walk in the Spirit,” how many different answers do you think we would get?
- I would imagine, we would get a lot and many of them would be perhaps ambiguous, subjective, or vague.
- In fact this is a problem.
 - When something as important as being able to walk in the Spirit is vague, how can we apply it concretely in our lives.
 - So how important is “Walking in the Spirit?”
 - **Perhaps it is the key to our faith.**
 - If we can’t walk in the Spirit, we’re going to be defeated, disappointed, and constantly frustrated.

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- In Galatians 5, the Apostle Paul tells us that there is a **war** going on inside us over who is going to control our will.
- For the **sinful nature** desires what is contrary to the **Spirit**, and the **Spirit** what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. (Galatians 5:17 NIV)
- **So how does a believer in Christ gain the victory?**
- According to the Apostle Paul, *live [walk] by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.* (Galatians 5:16 NIV)
- But if, we don't know how to live by the Spirit how are we going to gain **victory** over our **flesh**—our **base human instincts**, which like animals, are *hot wired* for propagation, survival, comfort, and thus prone to all kinds of **self-centered** attitudes and unrestrained and out-of-control actions.

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- Again, if the **key** to gaining victory is to “walk in the Spirit,” but for some reason we don’t know what “walking in the Spirit” is all about, we are in a bad situation.
- Because how can we apply something we don’t understand!
- However, we don’t have to lose hope or run down the streets screaming at the top of our lungs.
- Because I have **GOOD NEWS!**
 - Computers have come to our rescue!
 - Today through the aid of *artificial intelligence*, computers can now do tasks we never dreamed possible.

Narrative Science

- The prophets at **Narrative Science** of Evanston, Illinois, are now able to use *artificial intelligence* that takes the basic data from (sporting events, financial reports, and housing sales figures) and turn them into instant articles and press releases.
- Last fall, the **Big Ten Network** began using Narrative Science's program to generate updates of football and basketball games, and the speed at which the updates were posted led to a 40-percent increase in **Web traffic** for Big Ten football games.



Twitter & Robots

- So no matter what the subject, computers can now use artificial intelligence supplying us with all kinds of **information** about just about anything and then post it for us on twitter.
- However, the human brain will still need to process this data, and put it into categories, where we can sort it all out to what is important and what is not important.
- But isn't this great progress? Think of the possibilities.
- Computers can now not only think for us they can assist us on how to **"walk in the Spirit."**
- No longer will we need to listen for God's voice or search the scriptures, we will have **computers** telling us what's right and what's wrong.



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- The problem with people—even God’s people not being able to understand **God’s will** is not the *availability* of information, but the **hardness of our heart**.
- According to the Bible, the Spirit of God’s voice is everywhere,
 - *Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice? On the heights along the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand; beside the gates leading into the city, at the entrances, she cries aloud: “To you, O men, I call out; I raise my voice to all mankind. You who are simple, gain prudence; you who are foolish, gain understanding. Listen, for I have worthy things to say; I open my lips to speak what is right. My mouth speaks what is true, for my lips detest wickedness. (Proverbs 8:1–7 NIV)*

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- *They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the LORD Almighty was very angry. (Zechariah 7:12 NIV)*
- *For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them. (Matthew 13:15 NIV)*
- *Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent. He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, ... (Mark 3:4–5 NIV)*

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- What was the purpose of the **New Covenant**?
- *This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. (Jeremiah 31:33 NIV)*
- *... they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” (Jeremiah 31:34 NIV)*
- *When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth ... he will guide you into all truth. (John 15:26, 16:13 NIV)*

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- What was the problem with the **Old Covenant**?
 - For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. (Hebrews 8:7 NIV)
 - ... the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. (Hebrews 9:9 NIV)
 - They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings — external regulations applying until the time of the new order. (Hebrews 9:10 NIV)
 - How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (Hebrews 9:14 NIV)



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- So, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did.”
- “That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, ‘Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.’ So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’” (Hebrews 3:7–11 NIV)

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- *There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; . . . Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience. (Hebrews 4:9–11 NIV)*
- *We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. As has just been said: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.” (Hebrews 3:14–15 NIV)*

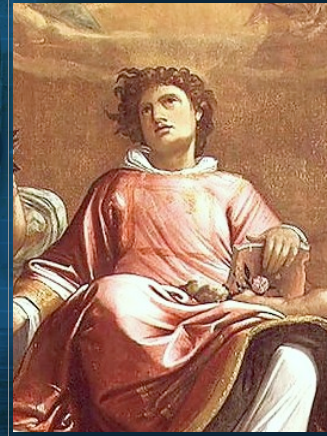
Stephen

- According to the Book of Acts, **Stephen** was one of the first deacons of the church and had the responsibility of making sure widows were properly looked after.
- It also says, *Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people.* (Acts 6:8 NIV)
- In fact, the Bible says, that *no one could stand up against wisdom or the spirit in which he spoke.* (Acts 6:10)
- However, the Sanhedrin, put him on trial for speaking against the **Temple**.



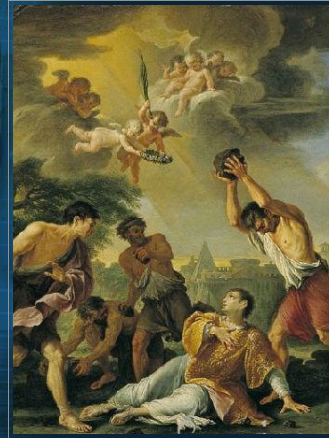
Stephen's Defense

- In his defense, Stephen went into a long discourse of the Jewish people starting with Abraham on how God's Spirit had led His people.
- Stephen's point was God does not need a building (Temple), but **hearts** that want to obey Him.
- *"You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the **Holy Spirit!**" (Acts 7:51 NIV)*
- He then goes on to say, . . . *you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.* (Acts 7:53 NIV)



The Stoning of Stephen

- When they heard this, they were **furious** and gnashed their teeth at him. (Acts 7:54 NIV)
- *But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. (Acts 7:55 NIV)*
- *“Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” (Acts 7:56 NIV)*



WALK IN THE SPIRIT



- **Walking in the Spirit** is *simply following the voice of the Holy Spirit who is seeking to guide us into the truth of God's word.*
- When we listen to our **conscience** and examine what we think we hear to what **God's by His Spirit has revealed in Scripture** we are doing well.
- In fact, we will grow in knowledge, understanding, and wisdom to the things of God as it is the Spirit Himself who is *teaching* us not man.
- So if you want to be **spiritual**, you don't have to be mystical and jump at every weird thought.
- **Relax**, all we need to do is **heed God speaking to us**—through **His word** and in **our conscience** and we will walking in the Spirit, growing in grace, and gaining the victory.

WALK IN THE SPIRIT



- *Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.* (Proverbs 4:23 NIV)
- Christ died for us so that we could be filled with His Spirit.
- As we take **communion** tonight, let not allow disappointments or deep hurts to tempt us to *resist* the Holy Spirit.
- God's word tells us to forgive and do good even to our enemies, so let us not be **stubborn** or **stiff-necked**.
- Let us yield to God's Spirit because God wants us to live in **victory**.
- Like Stephen, signs, wonders, and miracles follow those who believe.

The Lord's Supper

