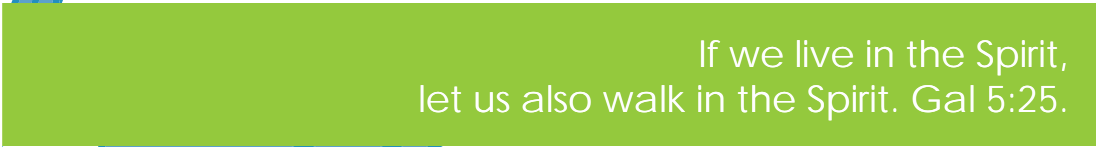





Live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit



If we live in the Spirit,
let us also walk in the Spirit. Gal 5:25.

by Bruce Hamilton




Have you considered your journey and its destination? Where is your life heading? What is your goal? Which path have you chosen?

Walking according to the flesh is a journey that leads to death. Heb 9:27. Living and walking in the Spirit is a journey from death to eternal life. Gal 5:25-26. Death is the result of sin. Gen 2:17, Rom 6:23, Jam 1:15. Eternal life is a gift from God, in Christ Jesus. Rom 6:23. The death caused by sin is not only physical death, it is also 'the second death' which is eternal separation from God and all things good. Rev 20:6, Pro 14:12, 16:25. This is the opposite of eternal life. The way of the flesh and the way of the Spirit lead in opposite directions. One leads to life and the other to death. Gal 5:17.

The way of the flesh follows a natural instinct for survival. Typically, you will learn from your mistakes, you will watch and learn from others' mistakes, you will seek to become skilled in avoiding the full consequences for your actions. If you walk the way of a natural, fleshly person, the best you can do is to learn to take some accountability for your actions, and to realise that you can choose your actions but you cannot choose the consequences or outcomes. God has another way for you to walk: by His Spirit, which will be contrary to your natural way of living.

When you go from one place to another, you are on a journey to a destination. Some journeys are long and some are short, but every journey has a destination. To get to a destination, you have to know what the destination is and how to get there. You must choose which path to follow.

Your life is a journey. You begin life as a baby, unable to walk or talk. From there, you learn, grow, mature, and become more and more skilled in all sorts of things. You meet people, you make friends, you laugh, you cry, you face challenges and difficulties, you experience success and failure, you make choices and in so doing, you grow up and walk through life. For some, the walk seems easier than for others, but whether it is easy or hard is not the issue. The question is, where does it lead? What is the destination? Life or death is the end result of our journey on earth. Living by the flesh leads to death. Living by the Spirit leads to life. Rom 8:5.



We have already said that there are two ways to walk – two journeys, two destinations. However, many aspects of both journeys appear to be much the same, despite having opposite outcomes. Why is that? It is because we have the same kind of flesh and blood, live in the same world and face the same trials and temptations. 1Co 10:13. This is true whether you are spiritual or fleshly. However, your physical flesh and the things you are tempted with are not the main problem. Your desires are the problem.

Your desires are firstly what you 'will' to do, and then they are made known by what you actually 'choose' to do. Have you ever heard the saying, 'Actions speak louder than words'? What this means is that it is no use saying or thinking one thing if you then go and do something different. Your actions reveal the desires of your heart.

Before you can do the will of God, you must be illuminated by the word of God and be given the Spirit; and then you can know the things that are freely given to you by God. 1Co 2:12. When this has happened, there is a spiritual reality for your life. As you stay tuned into the mind of the Spirit by prayer, fellowship and listening to the word of God, you are able to hear the voice of the Spirit and follow His leading for your life. When you live this way, you are walking in the Spirit. As you follow the leading of the Spirit, your heart's desire to be a son of God is clearly seen. Walking in the Spirit is the only way for your will to be conformed to God's will for your life. Remember, if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if, by the Spirit, you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. Rom 8:13-14.

A clear example of living and walking by the Spirit was demonstrated by Jesus when He was in the wilderness and fasting, being tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus did not desire

power and authority for Himself or even to test what God had said. His desire was to live by the word of God in the power of the Spirit, worshipping and serving God only. Jesus did not have some special power as God the Son, that made Him able to resist the devil. Jesus was hungry and on His own in the wilderness. He knew the weakness of His flesh, but Jesus was able to resist the devil because He had special power given to Him by the Spirit of God. Jesus was baptised and filled with the Holy Spirit, and then He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. Luk 4:1. After overcoming the devil, Jesus returned to Galilee and began His ministry in the power of the Spirit. Luk 4:14.

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Jesus did not just call on the Spirit when He needed help and then live according to His own will at other times. He was living and walking by the Spirit every moment of every day. You can be baptised and filled with the Holy Spirit and have access to the same power that Jesus had, to enable you to resist the devil and escape all kinds of temptation. 1Co 10:13. You, too, can live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit. You can live by every word of God, worshipping Him and serving Him all the days of your life, bearing 'fruit to holiness and everlasting life'. You can live happily as a son of God, walking each day with confidence that you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Rom 8:9. ■

