

Seeking to Apply God's Word to Our Lives

The Spirit-Led Life

This paper seeks to practically explain who the Holy Spirit is, His ministry in our lives, and how we can experience the Spirit-led life.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

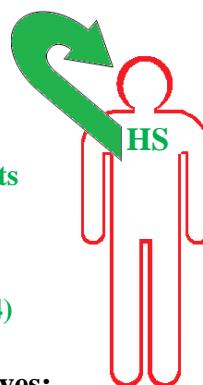
The Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4), being the third person of the Godhead (Matthew 28:19). He is called the "Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 3:16), the "Spirit of Christ" (Romans 8:9), the "Spirit of the Lord" (Acts 5:9), the "Spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:29), and the "Spirit of truth" (John 14:17).

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit came upon individuals to physically empower (Judges 14:6), to grant wisdom (Exodus 35:31), and to prophesy (1 Samuel 10:6). When Jesus was with His disciples on the last night, He spoke of sending the Holy Spirit after He went to the Father (John 16:7). The Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost, and the church was established (Acts 2:1-4). Since that day, when a person believes in Christ, he is indwelt with the Holy Spirit. He is sealed by the Spirit for the day of redemption (Ephesians 1:13, 4:30), and the Spirit is given as a pledge of our inheritance (Ephesians 1:14).

The Spirit continually attempts to lead our lives:

The Spirit, denoted by the green arrow and, and "HS," attempts to continually lead our lives (Romans 8:14).¹ He guides us into all truth (John 16:13) using the Word of truth, God's Word (John 17:17; 2 Timothy 2:15). By doing so, the Spirit glorifies Christ (John 16:14).² Therefore, every thought, emotion, and will that reflects biblical truth and glorifies Christ is the Spirit attempting to lead our lives.

Every thought, emotion, and will that reflects biblical truth and glorifies Christ (John 16:13-14)



Our sinful flesh opposes the Spirit and attempts to lead our lives:

The "flesh" is our physical body, which is indwelt with sin.³ Galatians 5:17 reads, "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." The flesh, denoted by the red outline and arrow, attempts to lead our lives and continually opposes the leading of Spirit.⁴ Since every thought, emotion, and will that reflects biblical truth and glorifies Christ is from the Spirit (John 16:13-14), every thought, emotion, and will that doesn't reflect biblical truth and glorify Christ is a "desire of the flesh."

Every thought, emotion, and will that reflects biblical truth and glorifies Christ (John 16:13-14)



Every thought, emotion, and will that doesn't reflect biblical truth and glorify Christ (Galatians 5:17)

¹ In Romans 8:14, the phrase, "being led by the Spirit" is a present tense verb, denoting a continual action.

² Glorifying Christ can be defined as manifesting who Christ is and what He has done.

³ Before salvation, our spirit was dead (Ephesians 2:1) and we "lived in the lust of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and mind" (Ephesians 2:3). When we placed our faith in Christ, we became new spiritual creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17), but our flesh remained "sold in the bondage of sin" (Romans 7:14). As new creatures in Christ, we are not to identify with the sin in our flesh. Paul writes of the sin in our flesh, "so now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me" (Romans 7:17). Although we are accountable for allowing our flesh to sin, we are justified before God and seated with Christ in the heavenly places (Ephesians 2:5-7).

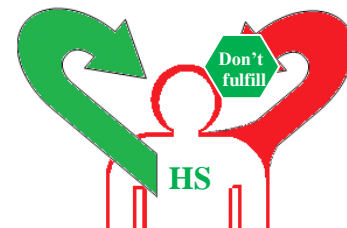
⁴ In Galatians 5:17, the phrase "sets its desire" is a present tense verb, denoting a continual action by the flesh.

As we walk by the Spirit, we continually glorify Christ:

In the beginning of Galatians 5:16, we are commanded to continually, “*walk by the Spirit.*”⁵ Walking by the Spirit is living our lives under the direction of the Holy Spirit. When we do this, the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Since the Spirit continually glorifies Christ (John 16:14), when we “*walk by the Spirit*” we fulfill the command, “*Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

As we walk by the Spirit, we do not fulfill the desire of the flesh:

Galatians 5:16 says, “*But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.*” The Greek word for “*carry out*” is defined as “*to complete or fulfill.*” We cannot stop the flesh from introducing thoughts into our minds, but as we walk by the Spirit, He leads us to not complete the “*desire of the flesh.*” Therefore, when we walk by the Spirit, we do not give consideration to the desire of the flesh.



Acting upon the desire of the flesh results in sin and death:

James 1:14 reads, “*But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.*” Being tempted by our own lust represents the flesh introducing its desire.⁶ James 1:15 describes what happens when we follow a temptation of the flesh. It reads, “*Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.*” Death can be defined as separation. This death does not mean that we have lost our salvation or eternal life. Rather, when we follow the flesh, we choose to quench the Spirit and thus separate ourselves from an intimate, dependent relationship with the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19).⁷ We continue to experience this death until we turn away from sin.⁸

Turning away from sin restores our intimate relationship with God:

When we choose to follow a temptation of the flesh, we quench the Spirit and separate ourselves from an intimate and dependent relationship with God. During these times, the Spirit uses the Word of God and our conscience to convict us of sin (Hebrews 4:12; 1 Timothy 1:19). When we turn away from sin, our relationship with God is restored.

The Spirit-led life is our response to God’s love for us:

The more we understand the magnitude of God’s love for us (Ephesians 3:18-19), the more we will love Him and submit to His Spirit. In 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, Paul writes, “*For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.*”

Conclusion:

Throughout each day, we choose to walk by the Spirit or follow the desire of the flesh. When we walk by the Spirit we do not carry out the desire of the flesh and we experience an intimate, moment by moment, relationship with God. This relationship is based upon the Word of God and glorifies Christ.

The more we understand the magnitude of God’s love for us, the more we will love Him and submit to His Spirit. Therefore, the Spirit-filled life is an intimate love relationship with God that takes a lifetime to cultivate.

“Seeking to Apply God’s Word to Our Lives” papers represent an overview of various Bible doctrines. Each paper contains biblical truths that often set TVBC apart from other churches and religious organizations. We invite the congregation’s biblically based feedback as we seek to accurately handle the Word of God.

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⁵ The Greek word for “*walk*” is a present tense command, denoting an ongoing action

⁶ Both the word “*desire*” in Galatians 5:16 and the word “*lust*” in James 1:14 are the Greek word “*epithumia.*”

⁷ In 1 Thessalonians 5:19, the phrase “*Do not quench*” literally reads “*Stop continually quenching*” in the Greek.

⁸ This turning away from sin is described in several ways. It is called the laying aside our sin (Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:8), putting aside our sin (James 1:21; 1 Peter 2:1), repenting of our sin (Revelation 3:19; 2 Corinthians 7:9) and confessing our sin (1 John 1:9).