

4. Walking in the Spirit

A person may not be able to tell the exact time or place, or trace all the chain of events in the process of conversion; but this does not prove him to be unconverted. Christ said to Nicodemus, "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes and where it goes: so is everyone who is born of the Spirit." John 3:8. Like the wind, which is invisible, yet the effects of which are plainly seen and felt, is the Spirit of God in its work upon the human heart.

If the heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God, the life will bear witness to the fact. We cannot do anything to change our hearts or to bring ourselves into harmony with God. We will reveal in our lives whether the grace of God is dwelling within us. A change will be seen in the character, the habits, and desires. The contrast will be clear and decided between what we have been and what we are.

Those who become new creatures in Christ Jesus will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Galatians 5:22, 23. They will no longer fashion themselves according to the former lusts, but by the faith of the Son of God they will follow in His steps, reflect His character, and purify themselves even as He is pure. This study will open to us the experience of 'walking in the Spirit.'

1. How do we not fulfill the lust of the flesh?

Galatians 5:16

Note: Genuine faith is followed by love, and love by obedience. All the powers and passions of the converted man are brought under the control of Christ. His Spirit is a renewing power, transforming to the divine image all who will receive it. The lusts of the flesh are no longer desirable, for your life is now 'hidden with Christ in God.' Colossians 3:3

2. What happens to your lifestyle when you walk in the Spirit?

Galatians 5:22-25

Note: Notice when Paul talks about the flesh in Galatians 5:19 he uses the phrase "works of the flesh" because that is all that man can do. In verse 22 he uses the word "fruit," because it is the Holy Spirit that produces fruit; we simply bear the fruit.

3. What blessing does a Christian experience in Christ?

Romans 8:1

Note: The reason that there is no condemnation for the Christian who has accepted the truth as it is in Christ Jesus is because on the cross Christ condemned the law of sin that is in the flesh (read verses 2 and 3).

4. What is fulfilled in those who walk according to the Spirit?

Romans 8:4

Note: In Christ alone will the sinner find release from the curse of the law, for in Christ the righteousness of the law is fulfilled, and by Him it is fulfilled in us. Romans 8:4. The law will allow nobody to be saved unless he has "the righteousness which is of God by faith," the faith of Jesus Christ.

5. What part of the body does the flesh or the Spirit control?

Romans 8:5

Note: The mind is the battle ground in the Christian warfare. The question is, "What is your mind occupied with?" Those who are walking in the flesh are always thinking about pleasing the desires of their sinful nature. When you walk in the Spirit, you want to please Christ. This is the battle of the mind from which you cannot relax. The key for victory is the continual receiving of Christ into the heart.

6. What is the result of being carnally minded? What is the result of being spiritually minded?

Romans 8:6 (first part) _____

Romans 8:6 (second part) _____

Note: The word "carnal" means controlled by the sinful desires of the flesh, your sinful nature. The flesh can only bring death to you, not life, because all that the flesh can produce is sin and "the wages of sin is death" (see Romans 6:23).

7. Why is the carnal mind, the mind controlled by the flesh, hostile to God?

Romans 8:7 _____

Note: When the mind is not under the direct influence of the Spirit of God, Satan can mold it as he chooses. All the rational powers which he controls he will turn to sin and death. He is directly opposed to God in his tastes, views, preferences, likes and dislikes, choice of things and pursuits; there is no appreciation for what God loves or approves, but a delight in those things which He despises; therefore a course is maintained which is offensive to God.

8. What is the result of being controlled by the fleshly mind?

Romans 8:8 _____

Note: Those controlled by the fleshly mind cannot please God. In Hebrews 11:6 it says that 'without faith it is impossible to please Him.' So this concludes that those controlled by the fleshly mind are without faith and if we are without faith we are without God; but when we receive Jesus into our lives we have His faith and with His faith all things are possible.

9. Who should the Christian allow to control his or her mind?

Romans 8:9 _____

Note: By obeying the gospel you have said in your heart, "Not I, but Christ." You have chosen not the flesh but the Spirit to control your life.

10. What is brought into captivity for those who are in Christ?

2 Corinthians 10: 4, 5 _____

Note: God wishes us to have the mastery over ourselves. But He cannot help us without our consent and co-operation. The divine Spirit works through the powers and senses given to man. Of ourselves, we are not able to bring the purposes and desires into harmony with the will of God; but if we are "willing to be made willing," the Savior will accomplish this for us, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5.

11. If Christ's Spirit is dwelling in me, what should I consider my body to be?

Romans 8:10 _____

Note: Can a man who has died, live? "Certainly not, then how shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" Rom.6:2. "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." Rom.6:6. The hearts that are open to receive the life of Christ will walk in a holier atmosphere than that of earth and will have constant communion with heaven.

12. How do we walk in Christ?

Colossians 2:6 _____

Note: This means that you are to study the life of Christ. You are to study it with more earnestness than you would study secular lines of knowledge, as eternal interests are more important than temporal, earthly pursuits. If you appreciate the value and sacredness of eternal things, you will bring your sharpest thoughts, your best energies, to the solving of the problem that involves your eternal well-being; for every other interest sinks into nothingness in comparison with that.