

# Romans

## Bible Study

### Walking in the Spirit

#### Romans 8:1—11

How is it possible for us to be certain we are in the perfect will of God? The answer is simple, but the process seems to be a mystery to most people. The Apostle Paul first gives all people the information needed to have a relationship with Christ in Romans 1—5. Following that, and with the assumption that he is speaking to a believer, he shows how we are now dead to sin (Romans 6) and to the Law (Romans 7). Instead of living to please the flesh, we are now to live a life pleasing to the Lord. This change of focus is only possible by walking in the Spirit. When we are walking in the Spirit, we are not able to fulfill the lust of the flesh because these two are completely contrary to each other (Galatians 5:16).

Paul then tells us that in order to walk in the Spirit, we need to have a renewed mind. This seems like an obvious statement since the natural mind, the one we were using for so long before becoming a believer, was necessary for us to walk in the flesh. Now that we are saved, we now need to think differently by becoming spiritually minded (Romans 8:6). This transformation requires that our mind be renewed so that it is not involved in pleasing the flesh, but instead becomes focused on our new spiritual state (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:23). In order for this renewal to take place, we need to assimilate the proper information (Colossians 3:10) so that the Holy Spirit has the proper tools to work with (Titus 3:5). We first need to take in God's word and meditate on that to begin our inward renovation (Colossians 3:6). This requires knowing which parts of Scripture we are to follow. If we read and study the wrong instructions, then we will not be renewed. Reading and understanding Israel's prophetic program is important, but it is not that information that will renew us so that we walk a proper walk. We will only be able to be renewed of mind by studying the information that pertains to the Church, the Body of Christ.

Once we have taken in the word of God, the Holy Spirit will take that and cause it to come alive in our lives. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to transform us so that we can live apart from the world. It's our job to study God's word so that we know what God expects of us. Notice from Romans 8:4 that we fulfill the Law internally, not through some external activity. The fulfillment comes about because of our relationship with the Lord through the Holy Spirit. The inward work of the Holy Spirit uses the word of God to produce an internal change in my thinking, which results in a change in my actions.

To understand what it means to walk in the Spirit it helps to reflect on what it means to walk in the flesh. We have all become experts at walking in the flesh because we have had so much practice. Before you became a believer, you did nothing but walk in the flesh. You went to work, you raised your kids, you went to the store, you washed the car, you lived your life just like everybody else. As you did these things, I'm sure you weren't wondering if you were doing this in the power of the flesh, the old nature. Chances are you didn't give it a second thought, you just lived your life.

Now, as a believer, we are to walk in the Spirit instead of in the flesh. The believer is capable of walking in the flesh or walking in the Spirit. How do I know which system I am operating in? Looking back, I know I was operating in the flesh before I was saved. I also am quite aware of when I am operating in the flesh even after I was saved. As I study God's word I become better able to determine when I am walking in the flesh and when I am operating in the Spirit. Immature believers may not be aware of what God desires, while the mature believer has studied God's word and knows Him and His desires.

But, how can I tell if I am walking in the Spirit? Just as you gave no thought to your walk before you were saved, it is now the natural and normal Christian who walks in the Spirit. While walking in the

Spirit you will find yourself going to work, raising your kids, going to the store, washing the car, living your life in many ways how you lived it before you were saved. However, you will find your focus has completely changed. Walking in the Spirit does not mean that you will change all your activities, it does mean that you will have a renewed mind and a new purpose. Walking in the Spirit is not about activity, it is about a changed mind and focus. When that happens, it will certainly affect what we do, but the walk is not about what we do, rather it is about who we are. When we are walking in the Spirit, we are playing our new position in Christ properly. As we mature, we will become better at playing our position. The transformed mind will be doing all things for the glory of God (1 Peter 4:11; 1 Corinthians 10:31).

### **Highest aspiration of a believer**

Most people think that the highest goal as a Christian is when we love God and love one another. (1 John 4:7—8, 19—21). However, Paul says the most important thing for a Christian to do is to walk in the Spirit. When we walk by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are actually fulfilling God's will for the believer's life (Colossians 1:9).

Walking in the flesh, which is by the power of the old nature, is the normal walk for a non-believer. Walking in the Spirit is the normal walk for a believer. If we were to hold these two people side by side, in many ways they would appear the same. This is because outward actions are not good indicators of an inward change. Our normal Christian life is something we are doing when we are not operating in the flesh. We can easily detect when we are operating in the power of the old nature. We know when we step away from the Spirit and put ourselves in control because we have had so much experience with the flesh. If we can identify when the flesh is active, then all the other times is when the Spirit is in control and we are walking in His power.

### **Erroneous teaching**

Walking in the Spirit is not a fulfillment of Ezekiel 36:26—27, as many Covenant theologians erroneously teach. Those who teach that doctrine confuse Israel's prophetic program with our Grace program by saying this verse is the promise of the giving of the Holy Spirit to the church. This incorrect view can be refuted by reading just a few verses before this where God tells the reader He is speaking to Israel (verse 22). A few verses later, He also promises them that they would be gathered out of all nations and put in their own land (verse 24), an unmistakable reference to Israel. How sad is it that their incorrect doctrine forces them to turn a clear passage into an allegorical fiasco.

Another common error is that of equating the work performed by the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 with how the Holy Spirit operates today. Many use Acts 2:41—42 to show that once the believers receive the Holy Spirit, they now walk in the Spirit and continue in Him by following the apostle's doctrine, by fellowshiping, by the breaking of bread and in praying. Although studying God's word and fellowship are important, this passage has nothing to do with walking in the Spirit in this dispensation. They were supernaturally taken over by the Holy Spirit so that they could speak in tongues, prophecy, and be in complete agreement with each other, even to the point of selling their possessions and entrusting the distribution to others (Acts 4:44—46). This is not how the Holy Spirit operates in this dispensation. It is impossible to understand what it means to walk in the Spirit unless Paul's writings are studied and understood.

Satan does not want believers to understand how to walk in the Spirit and he seems to find many ways to confuse us in our quest to do so. One of the main reasons for this confusion is that people do not separate Paul's writings for the Church from the rest of the Bible. Paul is the only one who tells us what God expects from us and how we are to walk in the Spirit.

For previous notes and additional mid-Acts materials please visit [www.MidActsTruths.com](http://www.MidActsTruths.com)