

# Walking in the Spirit vs. the Flesh

It's based on what we believe...

By B. D. Tate

There is a **condition of grace** it is that we ***walk in the Spirit*** therefore we need to understand what that means.

Ro 8:1 "There *is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, **who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**"

Ro 8:4 "that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us **who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**"

**Ga 5:16 "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.**

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

***What does walking according to the Spirit mean? It is based on what we believe and then acting on it, it is a decision we make and stay in it, it is a commitment to be faithful to Spiritual things...It is like a marriage, we may be in love but as time passes it is based on a decision we made and a commitment to be faithful in it. Marriage is something we walk in day to day, year after year...walking in the Spirit is faithfulness to God's grace.***

Let me begin by laying this foundation listen to these verses:

Joh 4:24 "**God is Spirit**, and those who worship Him must worship in **spirit and truth**."

Joh 17:17 "Sanctify them by Your truth. **Your word is truth**."

Joh 16:13 “However, when He, the **Spirit of truth**, has come, He will guide you into all truth...

From these verses we understand that God is Spirit and we must come to Him, be in Him, by the Spirit of truth. We also see clearly **that God’s Word is truth**. **Therefore we can grasp that God’s word is Spirit and truth!**

1) When we receive, accept, and **acknowledge** God’s Word we are in the Spirit and in truth. To walk according to the Spirit **is to walk in the Word of God**.

2) We also understand that **grace** is what God has done already on our behalf in Christ Jesus on the cross; therefore **faith** is our response to what God has done by believing Him and acting in that truth. **To walk in the Spirit is to believe the right things and act on them...**

With this in mind then we can conclude that walking according to the Spirit would be **growing in the knowing of the word of God** and **keeping it according to grace and faith**.

**Walking in the Spirit would be acknowledging every good thing that is in us in Christ Jesus (Phil. 1:6)**. **Walking according to the Spirit would be to grow in our understanding of God’s grace on our behalf in Jesus**.

3) Further, walking in the Spirit would be to **focus on God’s love for us and abide in that love**. This means turning our eyes upon what God’s love means to us, how it is expressed towards us, and what that love looks like in us. When we focus on God’s love for us and what Jesus has done for us we are seeing God’s grace. **To walk in the**

***Spirit is to have the right mind set and see our life the way God see's it—we are the beloved!***

Understanding this game plan doesn't mean we see how it works in our life, in reality, in practical ways, so what does this look like?

## **What does walking according the Spirit look like?**

Experientially the ***fruit of the Spirit*** is peace, love, joy, rest...We stop striving, we stop excusing, justifying, working from our own resources, which manifest in us as stress, anxiety, fear, pressure, guilt, condemnation, frustration, anger towards God, weariness, even resignation in giving up...the source of these ***negative*** feelings comes from the ***law's judgment*** against us as our own heart condemns us. The law penetrates our thoughts, imaginations, decisions, and inner conversations...however, in our born again Spirit, and in Christ Jesus, ***there is now no condemnation*** for Jesus has redeemed us from the ***curse of the law*** (Rom. 8:1 & Gal. 3:13)!

We are redeemed from the ***curse of the law*** this means that we are no longer under its dominion. We are not under its judgment any longer.

Ga 5:18 **But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.**

We experience the ***law's judgment*** in our conscience through guilt and condemnation. We feel separated and unworthy in God's presence. Our own hearts have no confidence before Him concerning our prayers knowing we are sinners. This constant battle of shame comes through the law calling out to us

“law breakers” and witnesses within us that we are deserving of death and/or rejection—**always testifying that we are *not good enough***. Under the law when we relate to God we are coming from a place of weakness ***not*** as sons and daughters. We beg for mercy and plead with God to answer our needs not acknowledging what Christ ***has done for us***. Christ has redeemed us from the curse and made us righteous before our God. ***It is in believing this and acting in agreement with it that we are walking according to the truth and therefore the Spirit.***

**This is a paradox to us:**

Heb. 4: 11 ***Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest...***

The word diligent means to exert labor or effort. Let us means that we must do it and the rest is what manifests when we enter into grace in the Spirit. There is a work but it is not our works...

Heb 4:10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from **his works...**

The works that we labor in diligently is **the obedience of faith**. We are now to forsake our own works under the law for no one can earn right standing or be justified before God. We ***accept in our born again experience*** that ***we have been made righteous as a gift*** through the blood of Christ. We stand in right standing with God and that means that ***our life is changed***. We are in a ***new position to operate by faith*** in the grace freely given; however that grace freely given doesn't mean we don't **contend for it**. We must overcome our own flesh, the temptations of

doubt and unbelief, the desire to justify ourselves, to walk in what we've been given.

## Obedience of faith!

Ro 1:5 Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for **obedience to the faith** among all nations for His name...

**Obedience to the faith** means obeying God's directive to accept and embrace God's grace on our behalf! The **works of God** are for us to **believe in Jesus**...that means to embrace all that God has done for us through Him!

## What did Jesus do?

- He beat the **law's judgment** against us!
- He took upon Himself **God's wrath** against sinners
- He bore the **punishment of our peace** before God's Holiness
- He bore the **stripes on His body for our healing**
- He **took upon Himself our grief, sorrow, and pain** (physically, emotionally, and mentally)
- He was **wounded for all of our transgressions!**

Isa. 53: 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our grief, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he *was* wounded for our transgressions; *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

## It Is A Gift!

I do not let sin have dominion! How can I do this? I do this by faith in His grace! I do this by believing what the Word of God teaches. I do this by **believing the right things** and acting upon them instead of what my flesh or carnal life, or world, teaches me to believe.

Ro 6:14 For sin shall not have **dominion over you**, *for you are not under law but under grace.*

A gift is not earned it is received and accepted. ***The Spirit life is not earned it is received and accepted.*** We train our minds by renewing them to think and reason spiritually—which means to agree with scripture. ***To think and act according to scripture is to be led by the Spirit; it is to walk in the Spirit. There is a battle within us and we through God’s grace overcome (contend for it) our flesh, the symptoms, the circumstances, the temptations, to believe and trust the Word of God!***

## **Walking in the Spirit; Applying it for Four Human Needs: Acceptance, Identity, Security, and Purpose!**

### ***Acceptance!***

Eph 1:6 “to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which **He has made us accepted in the Beloved.**

God wants us in His Spirit not walking according to the flesh and under the law any longer. He went to great length to provide what we needed in Jesus; He doesn’t want us to miss any of it.

Ro 8:32 He **who did not spare His own Son**, but delivered Him up for us all, **how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**

When we accept what Jesus did for us **we please the Lord**. When we **accept our acceptance** this means **we believe it and are acting upon it**. When our prayers and songs of worship reflect our acceptance in the Word of God, acknowledge His grace on our behalf, and we abide in His love for us, it is a sweet aroma to Him.

What Has God done for us? **He has made us accepted in the beloved**. We were once outcasts, separated from the love of God, but now in Him, in grace, **we are never separated from His love again**.

Eph 1:6 “to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us **accepted in the Beloved**.”

When we know this, established in this, and are certain of this...**we are walking in the Spirit!** We are not going to live as if we are separated from His love **by anything—that would be the flesh (under law) again!** This includes anything we did...or will do...Paul said:

Rom. 8: 35 **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

We unwittingly add this *P.S.* to verses like this and say, “Well, my sins separate me from God’s love. My thoughts, my imaginations, and my decisions...” God is not pleased with me, He is disappointed in my life...I’m not worthy of His love... ‘And we like the **prodigal son** come back to the Father saying, “I’m not

worthy of your love, just give me a servant's life, a small bed in a shack in one of your servant's homes." All of this is pride. We feel unworthy and somehow want or need to earn our way...**but righteousness is of faith not of any works of our own.** Why is it a gift? Listen to this verse:

Ro 4:16 Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* according to grace, **so that the promise might be sure to all the seed**, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

If God left our righteousness based upon ***our effort*** the law would nail us to the cross! No one would make it, no one would be justified, and all would fall short of God's glory. God in His great love for ALL OF US made a way through His Son for ALL OF US to be made righteous in Him. It is by faith, **God's gift**, according to grace so that the promise might be sure ***to all of us...***

When we were born again we were feeling our first love, that is His love for us, we glowed in it; but after time we begin to do old things, say and think bad things, and we knew we were not where we should be, our own heart condemned us, the law judged us as lawbreakers, and the demonic told us we are not worthy to be accepted...we think we've blown it...How untrue all of this is...

**What God did in Christ is perfect and forever** (Heb. 10:12)!

There is nothing that can separate us from God's love. He has taken care of all our sins, our shortcomings, and made us one in Jesus. ***Jesus makes everlasting intercession*** for us (Jesus makes us hit the mark of God's perfection & righteousness). Our works and efforts couldn't save us before Christ and they can't make us worthy after Christ. Our works of sin are taken away in Christ and

after being saved they were still taken away...***the only reason we feel unworthy is because our own hearts condemn us...we are accepted now and for all time...we are worthy through the work of our perfect Savior...this is the truth, this is walking in the Spirit!***

Therefore when we ***walk in the Spirit we do not condemn ourselves*** even though in the flesh we are deserving of condemnation—but we are not to consider ourselves in the flesh any longer (although we are here in this earth in flesh) we are in the Spirit and in Grace—WE ARE ACCEPTED ALWAYS!

II Cor. 5: 16 ***Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh...***

17 ***Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.***

Therefore, in dealing with sin in my life I am walking according to the Spirit ***when I consider it paid for***. When I sin again, I consider it an act of my sin nature and not my born again spirit. I confess and acknowledge it and repent from it ***denouncing its power in my life***. I look to God's grace in His will to cleanse me from all unrighteousness in my heart (I John 1:9). My conscience has been purged by the presence of the Holy Spirit within me and ***I reject sin consciousness because that is a product of relating to the law—an act of the flesh.***

I consider the ***law satisfied in me through Jesus***. It has no ***more*** claims in my life. Therefore I will not remain in guilt, condemnation, shame, or fear. I will not expect, accept, or tolerate the ***curse of the law*** in my life because that ***disrespects and diminishes*** the atonement. AS AN ACCEPTED SON OF GOD I am in right standing by faith in grace. Amen.

## ***Identity!***

Gal. 2:19 For I through the law **am dead to the law**, that I might live unto God.

20 **I am crucified with Christ**: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: **and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God**, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

***God wants us to identify ourselves the way He sees us.***

We are no longer to see ourselves according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. We've been made new creations in Christ Jesus. We are joint heirs with Christ and now have become children of God through the Spirit (Rom. 8:17). ***How we identify ourselves determines what we get in life.*** God has taken away our sin and reproach; we were once identified with lawlessness and disobedience. He has given us a new name, a new nature, and a new family. We were lost in trespasses and sins without hope and without God in this world. Now, however we are found and translated from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1:13).

***Our identity is not to be associated with the world any more.*** We are sons and daughters of the Most High God now. Jesus said, "My sheep know my voice and I call them by name and they follow me and a stranger's voice they will not follow" (John 10). This is what the Spirit says about us: we are seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:20); we have His name, His peace, His faith, His authority (Luke 10:19); we are the bride of Christ, we are His ambassadors, we are ministers of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:18). We are one in the Lord and Christ Jesus dwells in us (Col. 4:3). The Spirit of truth leads and guides us.

Therefore, when we identify ourselves in Christ and not of the world, when we see ourselves free from condemnation because of that identity in Him, ***we are walking in the Spirit.***

When we realize that Jesus has caused us to hit the mark of God's perfection, that God sees us through His son, and that we have passed from judgment to life, ***we are in the Spirit and not the flesh.***

When we answer the question: Who are we? And we with readied answer say, "We are sons of the living God in Christ Jesus our Lord!" ***we are operating in the truth, in the Spirit, and walking in the faith of God's grace.***

## **It is what we Believe! It is Our State of Mind and Our Decision to stay in the Spirit!**

We are to overcome the conflict within us! The problem arises when we don't believe what the scripture teaches us. The natural man does not receive anything from the Spirit and considers spiritual things foolishness (1 Cor. 2:14). On the one side our natural man is not able to receive spiritual things; yet, on the other side, we who are born again have been given new life in His name. **We have two identities within us** vying for our focus, attention, and heart. **The one that we feed the most, live to the most, believe the most is the one that we will experience the most.** We have the authority within us to decide which we are going to live to! ***When we embrace the Word of God, His grace and love for us, we are living to and walking in the Spirit.***

***Which identity are we going to live to?*** Let us choose (labor) to live to the Word and Spirit and therefore be spiritually minded! Let us identify with Christ in us over against the sin

nature and influence of the world. Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4)!

## **Security!**

Heb 13:5 *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will **never leave you nor forsake you.**"*

We have lived our lives depending upon human beings. First our family then on teachers, bosses, coaches, friends, professors, politicians, etc...***however, our greatest dependency has been upon ourselves.*** Most of us trust and believe we can and do take care of ourselves better than anyone else. Many of us strive and stress over trying to make a living and covet those who have it made. Most if not all of us worry about the future, about our jobs, and about how we are going to make ends meet. We worry about our safety and the safety of our loved ones. We are obsessed with security for our family and our well being. Many worry about the economy and future prosperity.

It is very difficult for us to let go of these things especially to trust some being we cannot see, touch, or talk to in natural terms. We are so ***sense dependent*** living by what we can see or hear around us in this world, ***that spiritual things are irrelevant to us.*** What I'm describing is natural, carnal (sense), and flesh oriented living. ***In other words, none of this is walking according to the Spirit.***

***Then the whole idea of living by faith seems absurd, foolish, and out of touch with reality.*** Many see faith as blind, a shot in the dark, something for another day or world, but not for

now, not for today, we have to get along in this world and we need money to do it. *What does faith have to do with real world needs?* If this sounds familiar just know this is our carnal, flesh, or natural man that does not receive the things of the spirit (I Cor. 2:14).

***Jesus said we cannot serve God and money!***

***Lu 16:13 “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” (Mammon: A Chaldee word signifying riches.)***

***The righteous are to live by faith.*** The just shall walk by faith; that seems to many as a dream world or fantasy. When faith has been taught by the church in such vague ways and in confusing applications it's no wonder we miss it concerning our security. ***Biblical faith knows God's will, knows God's voice, knows God's leading, and knows God's answers.*** Faith is to our advantage because it is ***revelation knowledge*** that is based upon the eternal word of God. Let everyone be a liar but God be true, the scripture testifies. God cannot lie and His word is surer than our next pay check. Jesus said that heaven and earth will pass away but “My word will never pass away.”

***With our security placed in natural things, human beings, and world circumstances it is no wonder that so many of us are worried—because all of these things change.*** How many of us find a ***deep and lasting peace*** over our security based on trusting natural sources?

Luke 6: Jesus said, “Do not worry about your life...do not have an anxious mind, do not seek after what the gentiles seek for your heavenly Father knows what you have need of even before we ask.” In fact, the scriptures testify:

II Pet. 1: 2 ***Grace and peace be multiplied to you*** in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,  
3 as His divine power **has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness**, ***through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue***,  
4 by which ***have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature***, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

This verse and others teach ***us that God has already anticipated every need and has already provided for them even before we were born***. God’s grace has already established that our needs for everything have been met in Jesus Christ. Grace and peace will be multiplied to us in the *knowledge of God and the Word of God in Jesus*. ***His grace is sufficient for us!***

I Co 12:9 And He said to me, ***“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”*** Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, ***that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”***

The Bible contains language to address every fear of mankind. God knows our need for security and has provided ***Himself as the answer*** to meet that need. The scriptures must say it a thousand times, “Do not be afraid...”

Joh 14:27 "Peace I leave with you, **My peace** I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

***What does it mean to walk in the Spirit in regards to security?*** It means that we do not lean on our own understanding nor trust in our own sinful hearts (Prov. 3:5), but wholly lean on Jesus' name. ***We are walking in the Spirit when we keep our mind stayed upon the grace and promise of God's provision and protection. We are being spiritually minded when we keep the word of God before us and not let the advice, the world's ways and wisdom destroy our peace in Jesus.***

Ps 91:4 He shall cover you with His feathers, **And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.**

God sent His word to heal us, His son to save us, His Spirit to comfort us, His peace to guide us, His name to protect and authorize us, His nature to dwell in us, ***but we must contend for it, we must labor to enter into that rest. How do we do this?***

II Cor. 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, ***we do not war according to the flesh.***

4 For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

5 ***casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...***

Who does this? The scripture teaches **us** to cast down and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ! ***When we practice these things we are walking in the Spirit!***

We are admonished to “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33). When we are filled with anxiety, worry, fear, even panic about our security we are not in the Spirit but the flesh and back under the law. ***When we can rest in His peace that we know God loves us, we know God has already provided for us anticipating every need we were ever going to have, and we trust in Him, that is walking in the Spirit!***

***We need to acknowledge that God has our security for us and our loved ones; therefore we give thanks for it now and always...that is spiritually minded living.***

### ***Purpose!***

God’s first purpose in our life is for us to ***know His love*** and having received it to be a loving person. His purpose for all of us is to be ***conformed into the image of Christ*** (Rom. 8:29). God had Jesus become our example that we should follow in His steps. He has become the grain of wheat that reproduces itself in all of us!

Joh 12:24 “Most assuredly, I say to you, ***unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.***

God’s purpose is for us ***to be like Jesus and do what Jesus did...because as He is so are we in this world*** (I John 4:17).

**God’s purpose for us now...ministers of reconciliation!**

God called us to himself and to His Spirit to ***empower us for the work of reconciliation.***

2Co 5:18 Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, **and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,**

2Co 5:19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, **and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.**

God has called us to work the works of Christ.

Joh 14:12 “Most assuredly, I say to you, **he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works** than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

He has called us to heal the sick, deliver the oppressed, set free those in bondage, raise the dead, cast out demons in His name.

Mt 10:8 “**Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons.** Freely you have received, freely give.

Lu 9:2 He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to **heal the sick.**

Lu 10:9 “**And heal the sick there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’**”

**God has called us to a supernatural realm of life that provides on a daily basis power to overcome the curse that is in the earth. We are called to perform the impossible not just the possible.** We are called to the TWO-FOLD commission to overcome ALL the works of the enemy in Jesus’ name which is **heal the sick and preach the gospel.** There is not one member of the body of Christ God has not called to work signs, wonders, and miracles to relieve pain and suffering, to show that Jesus is the way to God, to show that God has forgiven all sins, to show that nothing is impossible to those who believe, this is the ordained

way of life for believers! Every one of us has been called and PLACED INTO THE POSITION of being Christ's representatives, His ambassador, His body, His hands, His feet, His mouth, in order to bring about God's will upon the earth in our realm of influence!

## **FINDING OUR PURPOSE!**

God isn't **as** concerned about what job we have to live on, or what house we are living in, or what clothes or food we need to eat, **AS HE IS** our understanding that He has made us His representatives in every way like Christ. **We are His REPRESENTING of Christ to the world. He cares about our jobs, home, clothes, food, and needs but the first priority is the Kingdom of God in the lives of others.** Our purpose then is to manifest (light of the world) and reveal God's glory by destroying the works of the devil in people's lives around us. We are in the name of Christ empowered so that unbelievers can see and know that Jesus is Lord (Mr 16:17)!

## **WE HAVE THE GREATEST JOB!**

Think about this for a moment. This calling is so vitally important that Jesus said, **"Unless you people see signs and wonders you will in no wise believe** (John 4:48)". And because the people are NOT seeing signs and wonders through His representatives, they do not believe! Anyone can make a claim to truth but only Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit operating through a believer can back it up! **And back it up is our position, placement, job, career, and fulfillment in this life.**

**We are the laborers!** This is our place...

Lu 10:2 Then He said to them, "The harvest truly *is* great, but the laborers *are* few; **therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.**

**We can now decide that nothing is more important than fulfilling God's call upon us as individuals and as a body of believers.** We can decide now that mobilizing together and making God's call to battle foremost in every respect **will provide the most fulfilling days of our lives.** We are the body of Christ now and in this place to work the works of Christ. **What must I do to prepare and accept my preparedness in Christ to walk just as Jesus walked?**

There is no greater joy or fulfillment than winning the lost and leading them to Jesus! There is no greater job or placement than being a minister of reconciliation which IS THE WILL OF GOD BEING DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN through us!

Let me end this by saying that there is no end to the jobs available for this kind of work. The laborers are few...**no one has a corner on the market we can all experience the very best of God's glory through us in this matter**...the only qualifications are being born again and a willingness to be broken before him...then it is listen, learn, follow, obey, exercise His authority and see His glory to meet the needs around us.

**We must realize that we have the same God, and the Same Spirit in us for the Same reasons, to do the same things that Christ did**...He healed multitudes not just a few...imagine then what God wants to do with many laborers in His name!

**Concluding:**

**What does walking according to the Spirit mean? It is based on what we believe and then acting on it, it is a decision we make and stay in it, it is a commitment to be faithful to Spiritual things...walking in the Spirit is faithfulness to God's grace.**

***It is walking in the Spirit to be ever mind-filled with this true purpose for every believer to be like Jesus in this fallen world.*** We are to imagine it done through us, practice and participate in every way what Jesus did...when we neglect so great a commission, get busy with the world, our dreams, our things, we are in essence **distracted from** this one truth, we are back in the flesh. ***The World is passing away, nothing will remain except those who have been won and saved in Jesus Christ!*** Let us store up treasure in heaven by staying spiritually minded!