

WALK THIS WAY

SPIRIT FILLED LIFE



BIG IDEA: We often talk about our walk with the Lord. But what does it really mean to walk with Him? Can we walk with Jesus now in the 20th century as the disciples did when He walked on the face of the earth? How do we do it?

The apostle Paul exhorts us to walk by the Spirit. As you and your group members learn to keep in step with the Spirit, you will experience the intimate, life-transforming relationship with the Lord that is characterized by a walk together.

This study will help you and your group members explore what it means to walk in the Spirit and what He can do in your lives.



DESIRED LIFE CHANGE: As a result of this study, your group will depend more on the Holy Spirit in their challenges and struggles.



AUDIENCE: This lesson is designed for students who are just becoming grounded in their walk with the Lord. It's assumed that they have been exposed to the concept of the Filling of the Holy Spirit.



LEADER'S PREPARATION: Read Galatians 5:16-26 three times. Underline each reference to the Spirit. Work through the leader's guide and answer each question. The lesson does not try to explain or explore every concept in this passage. It focuses only on the three key statements regarding our relationship to the Spirit of God. Circle and meditate on those statements. Be prepared to share your story related to this topic. Let your group see how these truths have changed your life. NOTE: If your group is unfamiliar with the role of the Spirit, you might choose to open the study by looking at the following verses that deal with the Spirit's activity in our lives: John 14:16,17; John 16:8,13,14; Romans 8:16.



AT A GLANCE

As your group interacts in this study, they will observe . . .

This is my **WORLD:** I want to be consistent in my relationship with God

This is my **NEED:** My relationship with Jesus is supposed to be a walk. But how can I walk with Him like His disciples did 2,000 years ago?

This is my **ANSWER:** I can walk in the Spirit. I can consistently depend on Him, trust Him, and experience His love and forgiveness.

This is the **DIFFERENCE:** If I walk in the Spirit, my lifestyle will be transformed and I will bear the fruit of the Spirit.

This is what I'll **DO:** I am going to take steps to walk in the Spirit in an area of challenge or difficulty in my life.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION - WHY IS THIS STUDY IMPORTANT?



This passage in Galatians 5 is one of the clearest instructions in God's Word to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and avoid the tendencies of our fleshly, sinful nature.

Because it is difficult to be consistent in our relationship with God, Paul reminds us to be actively dependent on the Lord moment-by-moment. This passage reminds us to be intentional. That is, we are commanded to do something—"Walk by the Spirit." All of us need a reminder. It is easy to depend on God and trust Him one day, or one minute, and not the next.

An inconsistent walk results in a lack of growth and intimacy with God, and being unprepared to reach out to others on a moment's notice. In this passage Paul jolts our memory and reinforces the truth that God's love and forgiveness and the filling of the Spirit are to be experienced by believers as consistently and naturally as taking a walk with Jesus.

When your group learns to put spiritual principles in motion and walk in the Spirit, their enthusiasm for Christ will be contagious. The fruit of the Spirit in their lives will be noticed by others. When students are confident about their walk with God they will be motivated to reach out to others like never before.



WALK THIS WAY

TOOLBOX

- THINK
- OBSERVE
- CLOSE-UP
- WRITE
- DISCUSS
- FEELINGS
- BRAINSTORM
- REFERENCE
- PASSAGE
- ARTICLE
- BIG IDEA
- CROSSROAD

If you could take a one hour walk with any living person, who would you choose?

WALKING

The first person reputed to have "walked around the world" is George Matthew Schilling (USA) from August 3, 1887 to 1904, but the first verified achievement in this category was by David Kunst (b.1939) from June 20, 1970 to October 5, 1974. He wore out 21 pairs of shoes in the process.

George Meegan (b. October 2, 1952) of Rainham, Great Britain walked 19,019 miles from Usuaia, in the southern tip of South America, to Prudhoe Bay northern Alaska, taking 2,426 days from January 26, 1977 to September 18, 1983. He thus completed the first traverse of the Americas and western hemisphere on foot.

The Guinness Book of Records (New York: Bantam Books, 1993), p.516.

EXPLORE

Why?

Jesus called men to "Follow me."
Matthew 4:19

EXPLORE

What do you think it would have been like to have physically walked with Jesus as His follower?

What would have been the greatest benefit you experienced?

DISCUSS

Why is it so difficult to experience this kind of intimate relationship with Jesus today?

Let's explore what walking with Jesus might be like today.

1 **ASK**

2 **ASK**
POSSIBLE RESPONSE: I'd enjoy their company and be energized by the time together. They are good listeners. They like being with me.

3 **ASK**: What would you talk about?

4 **ASK**
OPTIONAL CLARIFYING QUESTION: What do you think you would have experienced? Seen? Heard?
POSSIBLE RESPONSE: I would see Him do miracles and hear Him teach like no other teacher in history. I could ask questions about anything. I would be energized by simply being in His presence.

5 **ASK**
POSSIBLE RESPONSE: I would actually see God work before my eyes! I would see God's love in action in practical, day-to-day life. I would experience His love myself.

6 **ASK**
POSSIBLE RESPONSE: He is not present with us physically like He was in the disciples' days. We can't see Him or talk to Him audibly. There are so many distractions in our lives, that we can't keep our attention on Christ.

4 STATE: Let's explore the meaning of the three phrases listed here: live by the Spirit, led by the Spirit, keep in step with the Spirit.

5 STATE EXAMPLE: We live life one step at a time. We make progress one step at a time. When we walk we are headed in a direction.

ASK EXAMPLE: You make progress in the Christian life by the Spirit. You need energy to walk just as you need the Spirit's power to walk.

ASK: What is the difference between walking *by* the Spirit and walking *with* the Spirit?

The Spirit isn't simply *accompanying* us, but is *enabling* us to live as God intended.

6 ASK POSSIBLE RESPONSE: He wants to guide and direct us and needs us to be aggressive followers responding to His leading.

ASK: What are other words for led?
–guided, directed, conducted, influence, pilot, steer.

ASK: To be led by someone requires what on our part?

–To follow and yield.

How does the Spirit lead us?

–Primarily through God's Word.

7 OPTIONAL: READ OR PARAPHRASE
"Actually walking is, by its very nature, a succession of dependent acts. When one foot is lifted in order to place it in front of the other one, it is done so in faith that the foot remaining on the ground will support the full weight of the body. Each foot in turn acts as a support while the other foot is being moved forward. Walking can only be done successfully by successive acts of faith in the power of one's feet. Likewise, the Christian walk can be done successfully only by constant dependence on the Holy Spirit's control over one's life."

–Charles C. Ryrie, *Balancing the Christian Life* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), pp.114-115.

8 ASK POSSIBLE RESPONSE: Conform their step to the others marching with them.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTION: How do you march in step with a person?

ASK
Depend on the Holy Spirit to do what He only can do . . . convict you of sin and empower you for change.

FOR LEADER: At this point in the Bible study, depending on the unique needs of your group, you may want to make sure they understand the concept of being filled with the Spirit and relate it to walking in the Spirit. Refer to the leader's resource section on the last page of this leader's guide.

1 ASK

2 READ

3 READ

How can I experience an intimate walk with God today?

1. Live by the Spirit
The word *live* is commonly translated walk.
How is life like a walk?
What are some images the phrase *walking by the Spirit* creates?

2. Led by the Spirit
What does it mean to be led by someone?
What insight does this phrase give regarding our relationship/walk with God?

3. Keep in step with the Spirit
Word translated "keep in step with" is a military term giving the idea of "falling in line with."
What characterizes soldiers when they march?
How can we "march in step with the Spirit?"

Galatians 5:16-26
16 So I say, **live by the Spirit**, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.
17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.
18 But if you are **led by the Spirit**, you are not under law.
19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;
20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions
21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.
22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.
24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.
25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us **keep in step with the Spirit**.
26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

CONTEXT
This book was written to the Christians in Galatia to encourage them to stay true to "salvation by faith, not by works." Paul wanted to give the Galatians sound doctrine to combat the legalistic teachers who were saying that it was necessary to keep Jewish law in order to be a true Christian. In chapters 5 and 6, Paul teaches how to experience our freedom in Christ without becoming enslaved to sin.

INSIGHT
SINFUL NATURE: the Greek word translated here by *The New International Version* is *sarx*. It is most commonly translated *flesh* by other versions. The term is extremely important in understanding Paul's teachings regarding man apart from Christ as well as the believer's struggle with sin. As used here, it has been defined as follows:
... *Flesh* represents the natural, created human aspect. As such it is not sinful—merely weak, limited and temporal. Because of its limitation, it is liable to sin, e.g., to set up the natural and human as God, neglecting the true God, and can even be regarded as mankind's master (Galatians 5:17). It then becomes "sinful flesh," with passions, indulgences, or "zeal, boasting," etc. (F.B. Knutson, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; p. 314).

THE ALTERNATIVE
What key phrases or ideas does Paul use to describe the alternative to walking by the Spirit?

SUMMARY
Paul's word pictures of life in the Spirit in Galatians 5:16-26 illustrate the essential concepts of **moment-by-moment dependence, yieldedness, and obedience.**

9 ASK v.16 Gratify the desires of the sinful nature (the flesh)
v.17 You will be controlled by the sinful nature
v.18 You will live under the law
v.21 You will not inherit the kingdom of God

QUOTE: Fellowship with God

"God gave (man) a mind that he might know God, and a heart that he might love God, and a will that he might obey God . . . When you, a child of God, exercise your heart Godward to love Him and you exercise your will Godward to obey Him, then you are in fellowship with God . . . Believers glorify God by their growth and fruitfulness as they abide in Christ, as their mind, heart and will are in harmony and fellowship with the mind and heart and the will of the Redeemer."

–J. Dwight Pentecost, *Designed To Be Like Him* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), p.32.

10 READ

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION:
SINFUL NATURE:
 The Greek word translated here is sarx. This word provides three important challenges to consider:

1
What is the best translation?
 To the Bible translator *sarx* (like many other Greek words) provides a complex challenge. There is no one word in English which in its normal usages, expresses the same range of meaning as *sarx*. Many translations have chosen to translate it by *sinful nature*. Considerable discussion continues on what is the best translation of the word. Because of the differences in languages, no translation can perfectly match the original. But through careful study we can gain a clear understanding of the author's intended meaning.

2
What does it mean? To the Bible student and scholar, this challenge occurs because Paul uses *sarx* in many different ways without providing a clear definition or description of it. The meaning can only be understood by carefully considering how it is used in each occurrence and comparing it to other related biblical teaching. Examples of this can be found in many standard Bible references—including Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias. Providing it here is beyond the purpose and scope of this study. It would, however, be a profitable study on your own.

3
How should we live? Every believer faces the challenge of dealing with the desires of the *sarx* which, if unchecked, will produce ungodly acts. Paul commands us to "live by the Spirit and (we) will not gratify the desires of the *sarx*." A right relationship with the Spirit will have this as its natural effect. This study is designed to help you consider and apply this dynamic relationship to the Spirit.

What is the product of walking by the Spirit?

FRUIT	BENEFIT
Love _____	_____
Joy _____	_____
Peace _____	_____
Patience _____	_____
Kindness _____	_____
Goodness _____	_____
Faithfulness _____	_____
Gentleness _____	_____
Self-control _____	_____

1 ASK, FILL IN & DISCUSS

2 ASK: How would it benefit you in a practical way to be more _____?

Loving, joyful . . .

Have them choose the top 3-4 that they would like to see God develop in them.

FOR EXAMPLE: If I were more loving, people would like being around me and I'd probably have more and deeper friendships.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

"I need to act more loving."
 "I need to be more patient."
 "I need to exercise more self-control."
 "I'm going to become a more faithful person."
 "I...I...I...I...I..."

"I believe there is a reason Paul listed these virtues and moved on. They aren't given to us as goals to pursue. Why? Because you and I cannot produce fruit ... That's not our responsibility. The Holy Spirit is the producer. We are merely the bearers. The fruit of the Spirit was never intended to be a demonstration of dedication and resolve. It is the evidence of our dependency on and sensitivity to the promptings of the Spirit."
 Charles Stanley, *The Wonderful Spirit-Filled Life* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992), p.101.


3 READ

4 ASK: How would you paraphrase what Charles Stanley is saying here? What's the main point he's trying to make?


The key is not seeking the fruit but . . .

5 STATE


Walking by the Spirit

 **IDENTIFY**


What is the main challenge you are currently facing?

 **RELATE**

What would it look like for you to live by the Spirit in the face of this challenge?

 **RESULT**

What fruit would you expect to experience more of as you depend upon the Spirit?

 The secret to victorious living lies not in keeping a long litany of rules and regulations, but rather in walking hand in hand with the Holy Spirit of God. As you come to know and love God, your obedience to Him will be motivated by liberty rather than by legalism. You will genuinely desire to live as He wants you to. He will fill you with the attributes of Christlikeness—rich pleasures indeed.

—Bill Bright, *The Secret* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989), p.99.

For further study:
How You Can Walk in the Spirit—
 Bill Bright (New Life Publications)
 Romans 8:1-17

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are taken from the *New International Version*, ©1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society. Published by Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

- 1 **ASK & DISCUSS**
EXAMPLES: Exams, difficult roommate relationship, grades, fear of future.
- 2 **ASK & DISCUSS**
 Yield the situation to God, confess sin if appropriate, decide to trust in and rely on God to work out the best solution.
- 3 **ASK & DISCUSS**

L E A D E R ' S R E S O U R C E

ADDITIONAL HELP: To the right is an explanation of How to Walk in the Spirit.



BOOKS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The Secret –Bill Bright (*Thomas Nelson*)

The Holy Spirit –Billy Graham (*Word*)

Balancing the Christian Life–Charles Ryrie (*Moody Press*)



TOPIC CONNECTIONS

Related *InterACTA* small group studies: *Extreme Love; Under The Influence; and Pardon Me.*

After discussing the question, “How can we march in step with the Spirit?”, (page 2 of the student lesson) you may need to briefly explain exactly *how* to walk in the Spirit. Either a person is walking in the Spirit, or is not. Make sure each person in your group is confident of how to consistently walk in the Spirit.

The following is a suggested way to briefly explain this concept.

Walking in the Spirit involves being filled with the Holy Spirit moment by moment. We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5:18. That means that the filling of the Spirit is not automatic. It is something we are commanded to do. The present tense of the Greek verb in Ephesians 5:18 indicates continuous action and, therefore, the phrase “be filled with the Spirit” can be translated “be being filled.” We are filled at a point in time and we are to continue to “be filled” or walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16).

In the booklet, “Have You Made the Wonderful Discovery of the Spirit-Filled Life,” Bill Bright emphasizes that we are filled by the Holy Spirit by faith. He gives several helpful guidelines to appropriating the filling of the Spirit.

1. Sincerely DESIRE to be directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 5:6, John 7:37-39). You must want Christ to take His place on the throne of your life. Your desire should be “Lord, I want you to direct my life.”
2. CONFESS your sins (1John 1:1-2:3).
The word *confess* in the Greek is *homologeō* and means to “say the same as.” When you confess you agree with God that you have sinned. You admit that you have sinned. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1John 1:9). Confess the sin and then by faith thank God that He has forgiven your sins because Christ died for you. You are, by faith, trusting Him to forgive you just as He promised.
3. PRESENT every area of your life to God (Romans 12:1-2).
The word *present* in Romans 12:1 can also be translated *yield*. We need to yield to God all that we think, feel and do. We need to turn our difficulties, challenges and weaknesses to the Lord and say, “Lord, here is this weakness. I need you to change me from the inside out.” To yield every area to Him is also an act of faith. You are trusting Him to work in that area.
4. By FAITH claim the fullness of the Holy Spirit.
You need to simply ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and then trust He will do it. Faith is the key. If He commanded you to be filled (Ephesians 5:18), you know it is His will for you to be filled. In 1 John 5:14-15, God promises to answer when we pray according to His will. Is it His will for you to be filled? Yes. Then ask in faith and trust His promise to fill you.

Are you walking in the Spirit? Ask yourself these questions.

1. Do I really desire to have Christ directing and empowering my life?
2. Have I confessed my sin?
3. Have I yielded every area of my life to God?
4. Have I asked in faith to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

Walking in the Spirit involves a moment-by-moment conscious dependence on Him for every aspect of my life, and it involves the fundamental requirement to “be being filled.”

O V E R V I E W O F M E E T I N G T I M E



Planning your group session

	INTERACTION AS A GROUP	INTERACTION WITH THE STUDY & WORD	INTERACTION WITH GOD	UPCOMING INFORMATION	OTHER IDEAS
	Ice breaker? Refreshments?	Provided. Add personal story?	Worship / Praise / Prayer time?	Next meeting? Special event?	Music / Video?
Allocating your time	_____ min.	_____ min.	_____ min.	_____ min.	_____ min.

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