We have been looking at the subject that is crucial to every believer… and that is Sanctification.

Setting one’s self apart from the ways of the world to become more Christ-like.

It’s being what God created you to be, not what others want to see…

There in lies the tension that exists between:

* Pleasing God and pleasing the flesh.
* Pleasing God and pleasing ourselves/others.

The Christians only hope is to walk…

1. The way of the Holy Spirit – Open your Bibles to Galatians 5:16-25

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

What’s the context here? Living Godly lives of faith (sanctification).

The key to that…, which I gave a contrasting analogy on last time…

Being filled with the Holy Spirit does what alcohol/drugs do to influence and impact your behavior (only in a positive/Godly way).

To benefit your life here, and more importantly the eternal Kingdom of God, where you are going…

We serve a “Good Good Father”! He has awesome and amazing plans for everyone of you, no matter what age you are.

Paul understands this! He was experiencing it as the Holy Spirit inspired him to write to the churches in Galatia. Therefore we can trust what is written.

“Walk by the Spirit”.

In describing this, Paul uses the Greek word “Peripateo” which means to walk around/live/occupy yourself with yielding to the Holy Spirit.

He uses this term almost 40 times in his Epistles/letters to describe the believer’s Sanctification. So it must have been pretty important.

What are the paths of the Spirit?

17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh (they are contrasting pathways),

for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do (satisfying the appetites of your flesh).

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law (meaning, you won’t wind up on the wrong side of God’s judgement).

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident (they should be obvious): Things like sexual immorality (adultery/homosexuality/sex outside of what God has established to protect us), impurity (physical or moral uncleanliness, again protects us), sensuality (wantonness – loose living, headstrong, willful, careless), 20 idolatry (putting something ahead of the God who loves you, died for you, and has great plans for you), sorcery (witchcraft – which is where our word for medication/pharmacy comes from), enmity (hatred of others), strife (quarreling), jealousy, fits of (fierce) anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before (he is speaking to Christians), that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul would ask; if your life is characterized by ungodliness, then where is the Spirit of God in your life?

22 But the fruit of the Spirit (the things that the Spirit of God produces… where the Spirit’s path leads) is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

The idea is that there are two paths for us to choose from every day …

The flesh and what it desires… which usually leads to something self-serving, wrong, that’s not good for you or others, especially those who love you.

Which is not Characteristic of God’s children.

Paul encourages the believer that as you go about your day, be intentional in avoiding/dying to things associated with the “old you”… and instead let the Holy Spirit reflect the desires/values/character of Christ in you.

V25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

The Greek word that Paul uses here is a military term… Stoy-keho

to *march,* to *conform* to the virtue and piety (reverence & respect) for God.

I’m certain that if someone were to get out of step in their unit… that a drill sergeant would appear and let them know... and get them back in line…

Why? Because that’s his job and being out of step doesn’t represent your unit/commander & chief/or your country very well and it impacts those same people in a negative way.

Was the Holy Spirit not doing His job over the last 50+ years in America, to keep families from falling apart, to keep the church from becoming lukewarm?

No, it was the Christians…

Keep watch on your life… stay in step with the Holy Spirit…

If I think about my life as a Christian, I know the goal of the Holy Spirit is to change my life and my behavior from being:

* Disobedient to increasingly obedient.
* Less like my “old self” and more like Christ.
* Set apart from the world, not behaving like the world.

Why? Because God knows the negative result if I don’t…

And negative, sinful, preventable things that happen to me and you displeases Him. Because He loves us…

So the Spirit of God is ALWAYS going to influence and impact us in a positive way…

Not to make any choice, but the best choice, that will produce the best outcome not just for yours and my life, but the lives of other people on the planet…

“Walk by the Spirit” in your everyday life…

With those words in our minds, lets try and make sense of how this works in our daily lives.

Sanctification/Christ-likeness is the goal… So for that we need…

1. The Word of the Holy Spirit

This is the major, clear and obvious work of the Spirit in the life of a believer.

I hope that the moment you became a believer that someone put the Word of God in your hands and said “get to work at reading the Good Book!” If not, and you need a Bible, see me.

2 Peter 1:20-21

V20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things.

Meaning the author’s weren’t sitting around wondering what God was all about, and decided to write some good thoughts down. No…

21For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Peter is summarizing that it was God (the Holy Spirit) that spoke through the 40 authors of Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:16 – They are “God breathed words”. He spoke them Himself into the hearts of man.

So if you’re not reading the Bible regularly, good luck with having the Spirit of God make you increasingly like Christ. Which again is the goal of Christian living). The Holy Spirit won’t do it absent your choice.

And as I stated last week, the Pre-Christian (unbeliever) can read the Bible and experience no Sanctification/Christ-likeness.

Because the Bible makes a big deal out of the fact… that it is the Holy Spirit that enables our understanding of God’s Word.

1 Corinthians 2:6-14

We (Paul & the other Apostles) do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

 7No, we declare God’s wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.

8None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

9However, as it is written:

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard,
    and no mind has imagined
what God has prepared
    for those who love him.”

10these are the things God has revealed to us (Paul & other Apostles) by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

11For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

12What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

13This is what we speak (Paul & the other Apostles), not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.

14The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.

The bottom line is that understood God’s Word is the primary place where you will discover God’s purpose and plan for your life… as you walk by the Holy Spirit.

Unless God is involved, you can give someone a Bible, but it’s going to be nonsense/foolishness to them…

Just an old story book that has no bearing or relevance in their life.

Therefore no Sanctification/Christ-like change will occur.

In the life of a believer, however, God’s Word will be like milk to a baby…

There will be an understanding from and a reliance upon the Spirit of God to reveal the life transforming truth of God’s Word.

This is why you should always begin your daily Bible study time with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal what God wants to do in and thru your life that day.

You should also always end your prayers with “in Jesus name” Why? Because the Word of God says to… John 14:6

John 14:13-14

I’ll never forget the first time I heard someone end their prayer with “amen”… it was like, “OH NO”!

It made me feel sad…

The Holy Spirit apparently had not revealed that truth to them…

Some might think; “that’s ridiculous, are you telling me that God won’t bless and answer my prayers because I didn’t end with “in Jesus name”?

The more important answer that should be sought is; why wouldn’t a Christian want to pray and ask in Jesus’ name as the Scripture states?

Psalm 119:8 – Even the great King David knew he needed to grow in faithfulness and obedience to God’s Word…

May that truth inspire us to a greater awareness of the same…

It is the Spirit’s enlightenment and convicting us to apply God’s truth to our lives that brings about the transformation into Christ-likeness that Christians seek.

1. The work of the Holy Spirit.

Primarily the conviction of the Holy Spirit… John 16:8-10

And when he (the Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment.

9The world’s sin is that it refuses to believe in me (the Savior).

John 3:17 - For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

John 3:18 *-* Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.

The Spirit’s work is to draw people to the Father through a “saving faith in Jesus”. John 6:44

19This is the Judgement: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

20Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed.

21But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

The Spirit’s work is to influence us to live in the light of the righteousness of God and thereby keep us from the judgement that is coming.

The work of the Holy Spirit is to keep and seal the TRUE believer to live for Christ… and throughout our lives see more and more of 1 Corinthians 2:9 become true in our lives.

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard,
    and no mind has imagined
what God has prepared
    for those who love him.”

As we discovered last Wednesday in our study of Genesis 39.

The follower of God will face difficult tests (some extremely difficult to say no to because it is what our flesh desires)…,

but we must decrease our desires to feed the flesh, so His righteousness can increase in us.

Walking by the Spirit means walking in the great and awesome plan that He has for you and me…

To be Children of the Most High God who find their beneficial role in the family business of God…

Reaching the lost for Christ and for His Glory.

Do you have the Holy Spirit?

Does the Holy Spirit have you?

I encourage you (as the Holy Spirit reveals to us in Isaiah 55:6-7)…

You see… God has only your best interest at heart…

Come forward to an altar and seek the Lord while He may be found.

Make walking by the Holy Spirit and building God’s Kingdom your top priority.

Close: Ephesians 3:20-21