



# HOW TO WALK IN THE SPIRIT

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## TRANSFERABLE CONCEPT FOUR

If you have been living in spiritual defeat -- powerless and fruitless, wondering if there is any validity to the Christian life -- there is hope for you! What greater promise could Christ offer to the Christian than the assurance that he can walk daily in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and experience an abundant and fruitful life of purpose and adventure? Here is His promise:

*"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."*

*"And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father."*

*"You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."*

Certain basic spiritual truths, when understood and experienced by faith, bring revolutionary spiritual benefits. These proven principles can help you to be more consistent in your walk with God and be more effective in your witness for our dear Savior.

The Christian life, properly understood, is not complex nor difficult. As a matter of fact, the Christian life is very simple. It is so simple that we stumble over the very simplicity of it, and yet it is so difficult that no one can live it! This paradox occurs because the Christian life is a supernatural life. The only one who can help us live this abundant life is the Lord Jesus Christ who empowers us with His Holy Spirit.

## SPIRITUAL BREATHING

One of the most important truths of Scripture, the understanding and application of which has enriched my life as has no other truth, is a concept which I like to call "Spiritual Breathing." This concept has been shared with millions -- with revolutionary results -- through our literature and various training conferences and seminars.

As you walk in the Spirit by faith, practicing Spiritual Breathing, you need never again live in spiritual defeat. Spiritual Breathing, like physical breathing, is a process of exhaling the impure and inhaling the pure, an exercise in faith that enables you to experience God's love and forgiveness and walk in the Spirit as a way of life.

The moment you invited Christ into your life as Savior and Lord, you experienced a spiritual birth. You became a child of God and you were filled with the Holy Spirit. God forgave your sins - past, present and future - making you righteous, holy and acceptable in His sight because of Christ's sacrifice for you on the cross. You were given the power to live a holy life and to be a fruitful witness for God.

But the average Christian does not understand this concept of Spiritual Breathing as an exercise of faith and, as a result, lives on a spiritual roller coaster. He goes from one emotional experience to another living most of his life as a worldly Christian, controlling his own life -- frustrated and fruitless.

If this is your experience, Spiritual Breathing will enable you to get off this emotional roller coaster and enjoy the Christian life that the Lord Jesus promised to you when He said, "I came that they might have life and might have it abundantly." As an exercise in faith, Spiritual Breathing will make it possible for you to



continue to experience God's love, forgiveness, and the power and control of the Holy Spirit as a way of life.

## EXHALE

If you sin by committing a deliberate act of disobedience, breathe spiritually. Exhale by confession. God's Word promises in John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In the Greek, the original language of the New Testament, the word "confess" (*homologeō*) means to "agree with" or to "say along with." Such agreement involves at least three considerations.

**First**, you acknowledge that your sin or sins -- which should be named to God specifically -- are wrong and are therefore grievous to Him.

**Second**, you acknowledge that God has already forgiven you through Christ's death on the cross for your sins.

**Third**, you repent, which means that you change your attitude toward your sin. The power of the Holy Spirit will enable you to change both your attitude and conduct. Instead of doing what your old sinful nature -- your flesh -- wants to do, you can do what God wants you to do.

## INHALE

Now inhale by appropriating the fullness of God's Spirit by faith. Trust him to control and empower you according to his command to "be filled with the Spirit" which actually means to be constantly and continually controlled and empowered with the Holy Spirit. According to His promise, God hears you and grants your request because you pray according to His will. I encourage you to continue to claim his love, forgiveness and power by faith and continue to have fellowship with Him moment by moment.

## KEEP WALKING

You can get off your spiritual roller coaster, cease to be a worldly or carnal Christian, and become a Spirit-filled believer by practicing Spiritual Breathing. If you are breathing and inhaling by appropriating the fullness of the holy Spirit by faith - you are a Spirit-filled Christian.

You become a worldly Christian again when you develop (over time) an attitude of unbelief - when you

set your heart against believing the promises of 1 John 1:9 and 1 Corinthians 10:13:

*"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."*

You do not become carnal simply by committing one sin or a dozen or a hundred sins provided that you sincerely continue to breathe spiritually. You will become worldly only when you develop an attitude of unbelief and refuse to breathe spiritually.

You can know right now that you are filled with the Holy Spirit. Through the concept of Spiritual Breathing, you can go through life assured of his fullness. Simply keep short accounts with God. Do not let sins accumulate.

If you try to live the Christian life by your own fleshly effort, it becomes complex, difficult and even impossible to live. But when you invite the Lord Jesus to direct your life; when you know the reality of having been crucified with Christ and raised with Him by faith as a way of life; when you walk in the light as God is in the light in the fullness and power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus simply lives his abundant life within you in all of His resurrection power.

I'm not suggesting that the Christian who walks in the fullness of the Spirit will have no difficulties. Problems of poor health, loss of loved ones, financial needs and other such experiences are common to all people. However, many of our misfortunes are self-imposed because of our own worldly, selfish actions. The spiritual person is spared most of these self-imposed hardships. But when the problems do come, the spiritual person can face them with a calm, confident attitude because he is aware of God's resources which are available to him to deal with adversity.

This is not simply a matter of positive thinking. We are instructed to cast our cares upon the Lord Jesus because He cares for us. The spiritual person knows the trustworthiness of God from experience. The Lord becomes the problem-solver, and the trials and burdens of this world are no longer too great for us when He is carrying the load.

This was at the heart of the apostle Paul's moment-by-



moment experience:

*"I have been crucified with Christ: and I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. And the real life I now have within this body is a result of my trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

## KEEPING CHRIST ON THE THRONE

There is a throne, a control center -- the intersection of one's intellect, will and emotion -- in every life. And either self or Christ is on that throne.

That is what the Christian life is all about - just keeping Christ on the throne. You do this when you understand how to walk in the control and power of the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit came for the express purpose of glorifying Christ by enabling the believer to live a holy life and to be a fruitful witness for our dear Savior.

As I have said previously, to be sure you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you need to remember two important words: command and promise. The command is found in Ephesians 5:18:

*Be filled...with the Holy Spirit, and controlled by him.*  
(Living Bible)

And the promise is found in 1 John 5:14,15:

*Ask him for anything in line with his (God's) will. And ... we can be sure that he will answer us.* (Living Bible)

On the authority of God's command you know that you are praying according to His will when you ask Him to fill you - to control and empower you. Therefore, you can expect him to fill and empower you on the basis of His command and promise provided that you genuinely desire to be filled and trust him to fill you.

Remember that the Holy Spirit already dwells within you if you are a believer. You do not have to ask him to come into your life; he is already indwelling you. Your body was a temple of God from the moment you became a Christian. So you simply say to Him, "I surrender my life to You, and by faith I claim Your fullness and power."

Then continue to breathe spiritually, exhaling whenever the Holy Spirit reveals sin that you need to confess and inhaling as you go on walking in the fullness and control of the Spirit by faith. Some

Christians breathe spiritually faster and more often than others.

## DON'T RELY ON FEELINGS

Do not depend upon feelings. Tied as they are to your ever-changing circumstances, feelings are unreliable in evaluating your relationship with God. The unchanging promises of God's Word, not your feelings, are your authority. The Christian is to live by faith, trusting in the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word. A train is a good illustration of the relationship between fact, faith and feeling.

Let us call the train engine "fact" -- the fact of God's promises found in His Word. The fuel car we will call "faith" -- your trust in God and His Word. The caboose we will call "feelings."

As fuel flows into the engine, the train runs. It would be futile and, of course, ridiculous to attempt to pull the train by the caboose. In the same way you, as a Christian, should not depend upon feelings or emotion live a Spirit-filled life. Rather, God wants you to simply place your faith in his trustworthiness and the promises of His Word.

Feelings are like the caboose - they are important but are designed to follow a life of faith and obedience. Jesus promised all who obey Him, "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him." So, you can expect to have a valid emotional relationship with our Lord when you trust and obey Him.

To summarize then, you can know that your are filled with the Holy Spirit by trusting in God - His command and promise -- and you can go through life with that assurance.

## LIVE BY FAITH

Walking in the Spirit means living a life of faith.

God created us with a capacity for experiencing a broad range of feelings. Thank God you have them. But you cannot depend on them to validate your walk with the Lord Jesus. Valid emotions are simply the byproduct, the result, of faith and obedience. While feelings have their place in our lives, God did not intend for them to be emphasized above our faith in His Word. To seek an emotional experience



repudiates the command to walk by faith and is, in fact, an insult to God. Let emotions find their proper place in your relationship with Christ.

John 14:21 indicates that the most valid way to have an emotional experience is to be obedient to Christ. One of the greatest acts of obedience is to share Christ with others in the power of the Holy Spirit. Since He came to seek and to save the lost and has commissioned you to witness for Him, nothing could please the Savior more. If you want a valid, vital, exciting awareness of Christ in your experience, begin to share Christ with others as a way of life.

To walk in the Spirit, you must live according to God's promise, trusting in the integrity of God Himself. Faith must have an object, and the object of your faith is God, made known through His Word. God has proven himself to be worthy of your trust. There are thousands of promises for you contained in God's word, and no Christian has ever found any one of them to be untrue. When God says something, you can stake your life on it - you can know that He will not fail you.

In Romans 8:28 Paul writes, "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Do you believe this promise of God's Word? If so, you logically acknowledge the reasonableness of the command of God in 1 Thessalonians 5:18: "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Have you learned to say, "Thank You, Lord," when your heart is broken because of the loss of a loved one? Do you thank God when your body is wracked with pain? When you receive a letter terminating a love relationship? When you have financial reverses? When you fail an exam? When you are unemployed? Do you thank God when you are discriminated against personally, religiously, or racially?

You may say that only a fool would give thanks to God under such circumstances. Oh, not if you know "that in all things God works for the good of those who love him." If God has commanded you to give thanks, there is a reason for it. This is one of the most exciting lessons I have ever learned - the lesson of saying "Thank You" even when things go wrong.

You can say "Thank You" when the whole world is crumbling around you because your God is sovereign and omnipotent. He holds the world in His hands, and

you can trust Him, He loves you. And He promises to fight for you.

He has commanded you to cast all of your cares upon him because He cares for you. He personally visited this world and took your sins upon Himself, and He is waiting to bless and use you. But he will not bless and use you if you are worried and unbelieving. he will not bless and use you if you complain and criticize and find fault.

Some years ago we had a desperate need for more than a half million dollars toward the purchase of Arrowhead Springs, the Campus Crusade for Christ International Headquarters. The future of our worldwide ministry was at stake. Because of a technicality, our financial position had taken a terrible turn for the worse, and there appeared to be no hope. The whole ministry was in danger of being destroyed and my own reputation would be shattered.

When a word came to me from a friend that the money which we had been promised was no longer available, I fell to my knees and said, "Lord, what am I to do?" I opened my Bible to look for help and assurance. And I was reminded that all things work together for good to those who love God, that without faith, it is impossible to please Him, and that the just shall live by faith. I read the command from God to give thanks in everything.

So I thanked God in spite of what had happened. I thanked Him through my tears. I thanked Him that in His wisdom and love, He knows better than I what should be done and that out of this chaos and uncertainty would come a miraculous solution to our problem.

There on my knees, while I was giving thanks in spite of the disappointment I was feeling, God began to give me the genuine assurance that a miracle was really going to happen. Within ten days God provided an incredible solution to our problem - a true miracle. he demonstrated again that, when we trust Him, He is faithful and worthy of our trust.

The greatest privilege of life is to learn to trust God, learn how to walk by faith. I am still learning and am confident that one day I shall be able to trust God for infinitely greater things than those for which I am now able to trust Him. What a great opportunity is ours to walk with the King of kings every moment of every day of our lives, from the time that we awaken in the morning until we go to bed at night.



For many years it has been my practice to begin my day the night before by reading God's Word, meditating upon the attributes and trustworthiness of our wonderful Lord before I go to sleep at night. Then throughout the nightwatches, when my subconscious mind takes over, I continue thinking about Christ. When I awaken in the morning, my first thoughts are of Him.

I usually awaken with a psalm of praise on my lips and with an attitude of thanksgiving: "Oh, Lord, I thank You that I belong to You. I thank You that You live within me, and I thank You that You have forgiven my sins. I thank You that I am Your child."

"Now, as I begin this day, and as I continue throughout the day, I invite You to walk around in my body, love with my heart, speak with my lips and think with my mind. I thank You that You promised to do greater things through me than You did when You were here on the earth. By faith, I acknowledge Your greatness, Your power, your authority in my life, and I invite you to do anything You wish in and through me today." Although the words of my daily prayer may differ, my commitment remains the same.

I try to begin each day on my knees as a formal act of acknowledging his lordship. I seek to begin the day walking in the fullness of His power. What an adventure awaits those who trust the Lord! In summary, may I remind you that if you desire to walk moment by moment, day by day, in the fullness and power of God's Spirit, you must:

1. Be sure that you are filled with the Spirit, by faith on the basis of God's command to be filled and by claiming His promise that, if you ask according to His will, He will hear and answer.
2. Be prepared for spiritual conflict with the world, the flesh and the devil.
3. Know your resources as a child of God. Your strength must come from the Lord. You must abide in Him.
4. Live by faith, drawing daily upon the strength of our Lord, upon his wisdom, upon His power and His love, giving thanks in all circumstances.

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Dr. Bill Bright was the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ International.