

# Growing in the Grace of God #07 - the Holy Spirit Covenant Part 1

by Bob Hoekstra

---

*The Holy Spirit is the dynamic force behind the new covenant, bringing new life in Christ and causing us to walk in God's will and ways.*

**Duration:** 53:45

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, John 6:53, John 6:63, Romans 8:9, Galatians 3:2, Galatians 6:18, Ephesians 2:8-9

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Gods Grace"

---

## Description

In this sermon transcript, Pastor Chuck emphasizes the importance of focusing on the grace of God through Jesus rather than the law of Moses. He states that the Galatians' greatest need was to understand and walk in the power of the Spirit instead of relying on their own efforts. Pastor Chuck shares a personal story about ministering to a wayward husband and being deeply affected by the man's loss and brokenness. He also highlights the need for humility and recognition of our own shortcomings, as no one is exempt from the list of sins mentioned in the Bible. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the transformative power of God's grace and the need to rely on His Spirit rather than our own efforts.

---

## Transcript

Lord, we give you thanks for bringing us together again. We thank you for your great faithfulness to us, Lord, your mercy, your love, your grace. We come confessing even now, tonight, this week, these days, we need to grow in your grace, Lord.

We need your grace. We thank you that you're gracious. We ask you to give us great insight tonight by your Holy Spirit concerning the role of the Holy Spirit in the new covenant life of grace.

Just pour out your spirit, we pray, Lord. We need you in understanding, responding, communicating, and becoming what you want us to be. And we ask you to work that way even now in each one of us, Lord.

In Jesus' name, amen. Study number four, the Holy Spirit covenant. The Holy Spirit covenant.

We're looking at the grace of God, using the term often the new covenant of grace because that's what it is. The new covenant is a covenant of grace. It's an arrangement to live by the grace of God.

And it's contrasted often in scriptures by the law of God, the old covenant of law. The new covenant is all about the Holy Spirit, life in the Spirit, walking by the Spirit, the Spirit-filled life. Really, those phrases answer this question.

How do you live daily by the grace of God? Well, in the last study, if I recall right, though I wasn't here, if I recall what you studied on video, yes, in spirit I was, we looked a little bit at that, that living daily by the grace of God involves humility and faith, right? Maybe you recall that from the study. Humility and faith. Humility saying, I'm not adequate, Lord, to live the life you've called me to.

Faith saying, you are totally adequate, Lord, and I'm going to depend on you. And God gives grace to the humble, James 4.6. And Romans 5.2, through Jesus, we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand. So this new covenant of grace involves humility and faith, but another way to talk about the same thing, and we'll see that a few times tonight, another way to say the same thing in different words is to say the new covenant is all about the Holy Spirit, all about life in the Spirit, walking by the Spirit, the Spirit-filled life.

To begin to show how true that is biblically, let's look at our first heading, the Holy Spirit and the new covenant. The Holy Spirit and the new covenant, Ezekiel 36.27, a place we've been before. We'll return a number of times to these anchor Old Testament verses to show different aspects and implications of them and then develop them.

The Holy Spirit and the new covenant, Ezekiel 36.27, the promise of God through the prophets to bring a new covenant. I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and you will keep my judgments and do them. God promising to put a new heart and a new Spirit within His people, a promise of regeneration, spiritual life, where the Spirit of man becomes alive unto God, whereas it was dead toward God in Adam, a work of the Spirit of God, but involving God putting His Spirit within us as He gives us this new heart, verse 26, a new heart, a new Spirit.

It involves verse 27, I will put my Spirit within you. God's Holy Spirit indwelling us, bringing us new life in Christ and causing us to walk in His will and His ways. God's Spirit being the dynamic force.

Under the old covenant, it was a dynamic force of walking in the will of God, the best effort of man. And we'll see that contrast, we already have if you noticed it. We'll come later on to a study called New Covenant Obedience and we'll see so very clearly how the dynamic, driving, life-giving, life-changing, life-Christ-like, life-producing force of the new covenant is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The greatest lesson it seems in all of our lives for a lifelong is learning how to depend on, trust in, cooperate with, and allow God to do in and through us what only God can do. It's a lifelong lesson. We're so naturally prone to do it ourselves, count on ourselves, try harder, get new techniques, you know.

That's what's given rise to this great plethora of psychological theory flooding into the life of the church. It feeds the flesh, it's ideas and resource for the flesh. It can produce nothing of benefit for the kingdom of heaven.

God's kingdom is by the Spirit, life in Christ. The new covenant which was promised because the old that Israel had there to remind them of their need could not produce the life that God was calling for. So God says, I'll give you a new covenant.

It'll have to do with my Spirit changing you from the inside out. How appropriate that kind of promise is too when you look at John 6 and the teaching of Jesus, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, John 6. I was thinking about Matthew 6 and the Sermon on the Mount and how similar the teaching is there in a lot of it. The high standard of righteousness, the inability of man, the great need for God to do a work.

John 6, 53, look at the end of this verse, you have no life in you. What, again, radical statement this is. You have no life in you.

Why do we need the Spirit of God so desperately? Because innately, out of our own resources, there's no life. There's human existence, but it's fallen. And though actually many people talk about in Salvationist getting back to where Adam and Eve were, I think biblically that is a major underestimation of what God has done for us in Christ.

Adam and Eve were not joined as one with Christ. They had fellowship with God, but it was a lesser relationship of depth and reality that we have afforded to us in Christ. We are now in Christ and He lives in us.

And sure, they walked with Him in the cool of the garden and praise the Lord for that measure of fellowship they have, but we're not just restored to the garden, a place of ideal earthly existence. We are seated in the heavenly places now in Christ Jesus. And that's the life God calls us to in Christ.

Not just an improvement of human existence, but a radical exchange of a new kind of walk with God. You have no life in you, so what's the remedy for those who have no life in them? They need to find life somewhere else. Verse 63, it is the spirit who gives life, the flesh profits nothing.

Flesh, human life, human resource, profits nothing. It's the arena of man's problems, not the reservoir of his resources. It's the spirit who gives life.

The Christian life must come daily by a work of the spirit of God in us. See, Christ is our life and the Holy Spirit delivers that life to us in practical daily trust, dependence, obedience, and walking with Him. The Holy Spirit and the New Covenant, they are integrally intertwined.

Intertwined. You cannot separate them. Take the Holy Spirit out of the New Covenant, the reality of the life, the vitality is all gone.

We have no life in ourselves, it's the spirit who gives life. Romans 7.6 concerning the Holy Spirit and the New Covenant. Romans 7.6, but now we have been delivered from the law.

That again is radical language. Delivered from the old covenant of law. Having died to what we were held by.

We were held by that law in what? Condemnation. No one could measure up to it. So that, we've been delivered that is, so that we should serve in the newness of the spirit and not the oldness of the letter.

What's the oldness of the letter? The instructions, commands, demands of God, and man's best effort to live up to them called deeds of the flesh, works of the law, different ways to phrase it in Galatians and Romans. We've been delivered from the law, so we don't serve in oldness of the letter, but in a newness of the spirit, a freshness of vitality provided by the spirit alone. Not the deadness of rules to keep, but the vitality of the spirit to animate our lives.

What a difference. And again, what would you rather have? Ten commandments on stone to try your best to measure up to? Perfect as they were in their standard? As perfect as the God who gave them is? But offering no resource for us to obey them? Or the spirit of God, the spirit of the God who gave them, living within us to become our source of life and strength. I mean, every time you put it together in contrast that the scriptures use, it's like, what? There's no contest.

There's no choice. Yeah, amazing how we so often choose the direction that is no choice. That's just the natural way we gravitate.

It's like gravity pulls you down unless something lifts you up from it to move on or up, physically speaking. So it is spiritually. The flesh just pulls you down to all the bad choices, unless the spirit of God becomes the source of vitality and victory.

The Holy Spirit and the New Covenant, they just go hand in hand. Second Corinthians 3.6, another illustration of the central role the Holy Spirit plays in the New Covenant. Second Corinthians 3.6, speaking of God who also made us sufficient as ministers, servants of the New Covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit.

And again, why is that so important? For the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. We are servants of the New Covenant. We serve God under the arrangements of this New Covenant of grace.

It's a covenant not of the letter, not just rules to keep even the perfect rules of God. They're not how we relate to God. They tell us how desperately we need to relate to God, but that's not how we relate to God.

A major difference in that, not of the letter, but of the spirit. We serve in the New Covenant by the spirit of God. And again, the difference, look how critical it is.

The letter kills, but the spirit gives life. In your walk with God, in your ministry to others, do you want to relate under the letter that kills or the spirit that gives life? It is a life or death issue. When we're talking about the Old Covenant, New Covenant, law and grace, we're not in any way off on some theological rabbit trail or tangent.

And we're just driving relentlessly right into the heart of what the Kingdom of God is all about. It's a matter of life and death, spiritually speaking. The New Covenant is a Holy Spirit covenant.

It depends on the presence and the activity of the Holy Spirit in our lives, sharing God's life with us. Anything other than that is less than that and is not what we're called to. And again, this is not natural thinking, even for a natural walking according to the flesh, but zealously dedicated Christian.

This is not natural thinking. It can become, to borrow one of Pastor Chuck's beautiful phrases, it can become increasingly supernaturally natural, but it is not humanly natural. This is a whole new way to think.

How do we think? What do I do and how am I going to do it? I'm not doing it. Tell me more. I'll try harder.

No, that's not enough. Well, tell me more. I'll try twice as hard.

Well, that won't cut it. Well, just tell me everything then and I'll try ten times as hard. Maybe I'm missing one of the regulations.

Or maybe I'm fooling myself. Maybe I'm not trying as hard as I thought it was. And again, it's not that we are lawless in the sense that we don't care if our lives in any way reflect the will of God and the law.

It's not that. That's a perversion of the grace of God. That's what the flesh wants to produce.

And it's not that we don't get totally engaged in living the Christian life. We do. It's just on completely different kind of terms than we would ever think of on our own.

I mean, does a branch get involved in the bearing of fruit? Totally. But how much of that fruit can the branch produce on its own? None of it. Now, who but God can explain stuff like that? And yet, the more he talks to you about it, you go, oh, yeah, okay.

Channels, instruments, vessels, okay, all right. Fill, work, in, through, yes, glory. It just starts to build a mentality that's so different from natural life, irreligious or religious could ever come up with.

The Holy Spirit and the New Covenant. The New Covenant is the Holy Spirit covenant. And you notice we're taking time in this course to examine major characteristics of the New Covenant.

Covenant of grace, Holy Spirit covenant, a resurrection covenant, covenant of relationship, some of the vital central realities of that covenant. And here we see the New Covenant is the Holy Spirit covenant. Now, let's go back and do something we're going to be doing quite often in this class too.

Let's take a quick look at this issue related to justification. Then shift soon to where we're concentrating in this course, that is sanctification. We'll do that with virtually every issue we come to.

Because as we receive the Lord, that's also how we're to walk. And once we see how we're to receive the Lord, naturally what do we do? We shift back in the old way to walk. As much as we had to learn God's way to come to Christ and get salvation, we've got to learn God's way to walk in this great salvation.

So in each of these issues, we'll relate it to justification, starting out with God. Then we relate it to sanctification, going on with God, growing with God. First concerning justification, John 3 verses 5 and 6. Jesus answered, Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Unless we're born again, have more than a natural birth, we cannot get into the kingdom of God, the family of God. Reason being, that which is born of the flesh is flesh.

It never changes. You can make it more religious, you can make it talk more about God or less about God, but you can't change what flesh is. That which is born of natural humanity remains natural humanity.

You can't change it. What needs to be brought in is life from the Spirit of God. So we must be born again, born by the Spirit of God.

John chapter 1 speaks of that, verses 11 through 13. He came to his own, and his own did not receive him, speaking of Jesus. But as many as received him, they generally didn't, but some did, and as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

This is how to be born of the Spirit. Receiving the Lord, that is, accepting him into our life, bringing the life that he alone possesses and can give to us. Looking to the Lord Jesus, confessing him as Lord of life, giving us life, believing in his name, trusting only in him, believing in his name, depending on who he is and what he has done and what he provides.

All that tied up in that phrase, in his name. Believing in who he is, what he did and what he alone can provide. That's how we get new life.

That makes us children of God. We become born not of blood. Our bloodline on earth can't pass this on to us.

My daddy was a pastor, still is in ministry. One of my grandfathers was a circuit riding pastor in San Joaquin Valley, back in the end of the first half of this century. But that didn't keep me from being an absolute reprobate.

I proved this so clearly, that we're not born of human bloodline. If anything, it looked like I was going to be an example that it works the other way. Much exposure and you flee.

We may have some godly people in our human bloodline. They could not pass that on to us. But God, you know who my dad is.

And before him, who was it put it in the classic way, God has no grandchildren. He births all of them directly. Every generation, he birthed them.

Because he is I am. He doesn't pass that on for others to pass on. Nor of the will of the flesh.

Can't go to someone exercising their will for us, or we exercising our own will. You can't go to someone else, you know. Will of the flesh, kind of probably looking at our exercising, you know, we will.

I will do it. I will be better. I will get in heaven.

I will work out a deal with God. I will improve. Can't do it.

Can't get in that way. Or the will of man in general. You can't go to anyone in mankind and get a pass into the kingdom of heaven, you know.

No, Pastor Chuck lives next door to me. I wash his car or whatever. Listen, if you sat under a thousand messages and did not receive life from God alone, still would not be in the kingdom of heaven.

We're not born by the will of man. No one else can exercise their volition and pass it on to us. Boy, who wouldn't want to do that for many people you love? Friends, relatives, children, parents.

Most of us are still praying for unsaved relatives, you know. It's not by the will of man. We can't will it to them.

But it's available to them as all of us born, not of these things, but of God. And as surely as that birth comes from God, we're going to see in a moment the ongoing possession, development, enjoyment, and walk in that life must be a work of God as well. First Corinthians 6.11. First Corinthians 6.11. And such were some of you.

We were what? Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners. None of those, neither one or the other, will inherit the kingdom of God. Kind of a sober word because we're probably all on that list somewhere in one or two or three appearances.

And such were some of you. We may have started out with the word that way, but something happened to us that changes. We were washed.

But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. This is truth about justification. Even the use of the word sanctified there is in its initial sense.

By coming to Christ, you were set apart from Adam and the world and self and sin under Christ and his kingdom in heaven forever. That aspect of sanctified, the kind that's already happened for every believer. There are three aspects really of sanctification.

What's already happened for all of us. Everyone saved is set apart from Adam in Christ to God. Someday we'll be totally sanctified.

That is glorified, set apart completely for God's use and purpose and glory. No interference at all. Then all along the way, we're in the process of sanctification.

Practically daily being set apart more and more now for his will, his use, his glory. This is about that. You were sanctified.

It happened. You were washed, cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. You were justified, declared righteous, not guilty.

How? In the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. Remember hearing Ray Steadman tell a story once back in 1974. He said one Sunday night, I believe it was.

No, it was a Sunday morning because in those days, Sunday night, they just had body life service, they call it. It was music, worship, praise and testimony and ministering one to another. I sat in on one of those meetings in the early 1970s and there were like a thousand people and they're having like kind of a living room meeting.

They had guys running the aisles with microphones so everybody could hear and testimonies of praise or pleas for intercession or on and on. It had to be Sunday morning. He said that a man had just gotten out of prison, exceedingly hard life, drugs and burglary and all other kinds of brutal things.

He'd just gotten saved and he was coming to church for the first time. Well, you know how weird and self-conscious he felt, like most of us did, you know, initially introduced to church services. Oh, religious people.

Oh, they only knew what I was like, you know. I don't like the way they are anyway, you know. It was very strange.

He said this guy was just dying. He crept in in the back seat and all the while he felt like he was a visitor from Mars, you know. People singing, praising, studying the Bible and this is the passage Pastor Ray Stedman was teaching that day.

All this list, none of these will enter the kingdom of heaven and Ray stopped and said, you know, we're all on this list. He said, how many here see themselves on this list? I mean really, stand up. Whoever finds himself on this list, stand up.

You know, nobody moved, you know, self-righteous flesh. Even ones forgiving won't even admit, you know, how bad it was until a little old lady in the front row just kind of tottered up, you know. I think she was in her 80s or, you know, and then boom, boom, boom.

I mean, they started standing up everywhere until virtually everyone was standing. On the way out, Ray was back there at the front door and this new man saved from rough life passed by and he said, Ray asked him, you know, how he enjoyed the morning. He said, well, it was rough but I'll tell you what, these are my kind of people.

Isn't that great? I mean, that's where we came from. It's the grace of God that did it. Nothing we could do.

How foolish we are to think all of a sudden now we're going to take charge. Here's what happened. You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified.

How? In the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. The Holy Spirit was involved in our justification, in our initial sanctification, having us past tense, set apart for God, in having us washed. You were washed.

By the way, though this runs off on the direction of the Counseling God's Way class here at the Bible College and the seminars, these are not our identities. One of the impacts of the psychologizing of the faith in the American church is Christians are confessing the wrong identity. They're talking about what they were before they were saved or what their flesh is demonstrating now.

You know, like, well, I'm just an adulterer saved by grace. No, you were an adulterer. Your identity now is not an adulterous identity.

Your flesh is still capable of it, but you, that new creature in Christ, that's not your identity. You have a whole new identity in Christ. And those who are heavy into alcohol, you know, they'll say, I'm a recovering alcoholic.

Well, when did that happen? Well, I haven't had a drink in 25 years. Now, wait a minute. Who are you? Are you a drunkard or not? To use a more biblical term, you can't find alcoholism.

These isms are also out of psychological theory. Are you a drunkard or not? Oh, we're capable of getting drunk according to our flesh, but that's not our identity. See, and such were some of you.

That's not who we are anymore. We might find our old man and Adam on this list. I do.

Mine appears a few times there. It's like God is not going to let him miss the lineup, you know? Yeah. Do I hear six? Do I hear seven? We appear on that list, but that's who we were, not who we are.

Now we're new creatures in Christ. Old things have passed away. New things have come.

And learning to walk in that newness of life, not trying to reform or change that old life is what the grace of God is all about. Grace of God forgives the wrong of that old life, and the grace of God replaces it with a new life. That's the difference.

But see, the Spirit of God was involved in this. You were washed. You were sanctified.

You were justified, certainly in the name of the Lord Jesus. We knew it was all through his ministry, but and by the Spirit of our God. If the Holy Spirit had not taken all of that work and resource of Christ and applied it to our lives, we would still be on that list, and that would be our identity.

We would not be in the kingdom of God, because such will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. So the Holy Spirit's involved in justification and starting out with God. Galatians 3 is a great place to look, because in these two verses, Galatians 3.2 and 3.3, will shift.

So the Holy Spirit's involved in justification and starting out with God. Galatians 3 is a great place to look, because in these two verses, Galatians 3.2 and 3.3, will shift our thinking from justification to sanctification. Galatians 3.2. Oh, by the way, a little side praise note.

Also in Washington, I forgot to tell you on that trip up there to Olympia and Seattle, the Lord let me finish chapter 15 on the Counseling God's Way book and get a big jump into chapter 16, so there's just barely over one and a half chapters left. So praise God. By His grace, by His Spirit, I tried three years to do it.

Couldn't get it done. Starting out with God. Galatians 3.2. Galatians 3.2. This only I want to learn from you.

Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by the hearing of faith? Receiving the Spirit, starting out with God, having the Spirit of God first come to reside in our lives. How did that happen? Did that happen by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? That's the question here. It was clearly by the hearing of faith, wasn't it? God did not send the Holy Spirit forth to dwell in our lives and give us new life by any works of the law.

I mean, think of it. If you were trying to please God and make His family by good behavior, there's no way to even comprehend that God is watching, hoping you'll just get a little bit better at keeping the law, you know, and you're trying your best. You're getting a lot of exhortation instruction or shame or bribes, who knows what, from the religious world, you know, and you're trying your hardest and God's just waiting for you to go from what? 60% obedience to 70? Zero to one? I mean, what is He waiting for? To send forth the Spirit if it's by works of the law.

Oh, yes, there you did it. Here comes my spirit, you know, your works under the law are just good enough now to have the Spirit of God come. Well, not a true Christian anywhere would ever have a moment of that.

They know that's absolutely a violation of the Word of God. Did we receive the Spirit by works of the law or by the hearing of faith? It's by the hearing of faith. We heard the message that if we would repent of our sins, if we would put our trust and hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, if we believe that He died on that cross for us and was raised from the dead according to the scriptures, if we would just believe what we heard, the truth, the Spirit of God would be sent forth to give us new birth in the Spirit and life in Christ.

It was by the hearing of faith. Now, thus far, we're just looking at starting out with God and it has to do with the Holy Spirit. It's faith and grace and the Holy Spirit.

They go together. Now, right at this point, we see that not only was justification involving the receiving of the Spirit, but God builds on this through the Apostle Paul's ministry to take the same principle of reality, the work of the Spirit, over into the area of sanctification. Galatians 3.3. Are you so foolish having begun in

the Spirit? That's just been settled by the previous verse.

We began in the Spirit, not by works of the law, but by faith. Faith reaches into grace. Works of the law, that's reaching into the resources of the flesh, trying to get what it deserves.

It's very clear on justification here. The Spirit of God did not come any way but by faith, that is through grace. Now, verse 3. Are you so foolish having begun in the Spirit? Starting out this life in Christ by the work of the Spirit of God, and now is the shift from justification to sanctification.

Are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Are you now maturing and growing and developing by the flesh, by human resource, by human effort, by human ingenuity, by human achievement, by human progress? Are we so foolish? Well, in many ways, the religious world and many in the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ would have to stand up and say, well, yes, we're completely that foolish. We have really thought that though we began in the Spirit that the perfecting of your life was just up to you. You just had to get with it.

Or a hundred other ways to say it. It just depends who's talking. Are you going to do it or not? It isn't are you going to do it or not, it's do you realize whether you're even able or not? God is both willing and able, and He wants to work in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.

In salvation, He's been working a willing in us. We want the will of God now, but oh how we forget the doing is to be a work of Him too. That's jumping a little ahead because we're going to spend a lot of time in those two verses in Philippians 2 when we hit the study on new covenant obedience or obeying God under the grace of God.

Critical issue, important issue, and much in the scriptures on it. Here we've shifted though. Starting out with God, justification, it's by the work of the Spirit of God in this new covenant of grace.

Well how about going on with God? It's also by the work of the Spirit. Are you so foolish having begun in the Spirit? Are you now being made perfect by the flesh? How must we be made perfect? By the same resource that we began with God in. What's that? In the Spirit.

In the Spirit. Let me read a quote from Pastor Chuck's book, one of our textbooks, *Why Grace Changes Everything*. Page 217.

Page 217, Pastor Chuck's book, he wrote, Paul opened his letter to the Galatians with the salutation, Grace be to you. He closed it with, quote, Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

His benediction takes on a rich depth of meaning in light of the letter's sharp focus on the reason I'm quoting this paragraph right here is we're talking about Galatians. And Galatians is so much about the grace of God. The next sentence.

See, Galatians starts out with the grace of God, it ends with the grace of God, and oh, so often along the way expounds on the grace of God. Next sentence. After the letter's sharp focus on the glorious grace of God, the grace of Jesus, not the law of Moses, was the Galatians greatest need.

Now, Pastor Chuck, in the next sentence, says exactly the same thing with different words. Now listen. To walk in the power of the Spirit, not in the vain efforts of the flesh was their calling.

How can he intermingle those two statements in one paragraph, one talking about grace of God instead of the law of Moses? In the next sentence, the power of his spirit instead of the vain efforts of the flesh, because it's just two different ways to say the same thing. Two different ways to say the same thing. It's so helpful in learning to live by the grace of God to let God describe the whole thing for us in many terms.

In our six-hour seminar called Growing in the Grace of God, one of the studies is all about how living by the Spirit and living under the grace of God are the same thing described two different ways. Why does God do things like that? Because we need to hear all of it hundreds of times, and we need to hear every bit of it from a hundred different perspectives. There's this jewel of salvation, and the Lord describes it in hundreds of ways, how to enter into it, find the fullness of it.

Then he takes us over here and says, now look at it this way. Takes us over here, now look at it that way. Takes us around there, now look at it this way.

He's talking about the same thing all the time. I know way back as an early Christian and young pastor in the late 60s, I was trying to abide in Christ, to walk according to the Spirit, look unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, and be filled with the Spirit. I had about a dozen things I was trying to do.

I was trying to delineate all of them from each other. At that time, I didn't have a clue. They were all talking about walking in the fullness of life in Christ.

I thought they were maybe steps you had to go through, and I couldn't get them in order or something. Well, they each had a mystery they were getting at, but I hadn't gone that far. I remember that I was standing in the kitchen at home one day, and I'd been praying much, and in the word that morning, I just kind of turned, almost grabbed my wife, and I had laid out on a sheet of paper all these kind of terms, abiding in Christ, looking unto Jesus, and filled with the Spirit, and drinking living water.

I was wrestling with them. I can remember standing later that morning in the kitchen there on, I can even see the street, Santa Cruz in Garland, Texas, a northeast suburb of Dallas, and I just turned to my wife. I almost grabbed her.

I said, sweetheart, these are all talking about the same thing. I was so happy, I almost cried. It was like the windows of heaven opened up, because we had some people in the church who loved some of those phrases, and they couldn't stand some of the other ones.

They were this kind of Christian. Oh, not that kind. I'm pastoring all these folks.

And go sort that out, Pastor Bob. Oh, what a liberating, life-giving moment that was. I'll never forget it.

I've only been convinced hundreds of times over since then that that is the case. Living by the grace of God, and walking according to the Spirit. Which one are you doing, and when will you advance from one to the other? It can often be the kind of thinking.

Like so many other things in the Word, they're talking about the same thing. Reality, fullness, genuineness, abundance of life in Christ. Pastor Chuck mixes them right here.

I love it. One more encouraging confirmation from a godly man. Yes, Galatians is all about the grace of Jesus.

So he says, the grace of Jesus, not the law of Moses, was the Galatians' greatest need. And Galatians pounds on that grace, not law. Grace, not law.

Then close out the paragraph. He says, to walk in the power of His Spirit, not in the vain efforts of the flesh, was their calling. Same thing, different language.

Why? The flesh, that's the resource man draws on to try and live up to the law. Power of His Spirit, that's the grace of God at work on us, and in us, and through us. Holy Spirit, absolutely involved in sanctification, in applying the grace of God to our lives.

Look at Galatians 5. Galatians 5 has so much to do with the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5.16. I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. How does a Christian avoid fulfilling the lust of the flesh? Well, you try harder.

You get people to yell at you. You thump yourself over the head. You beat yourself over the back.

You join the parade and nations around the world on high holy days, and you beat yourself. I mean, how do you do it? How do you avoid fulfilling the lust of the flesh? I say then, walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Live by dependence upon the presence and activity and work of the Holy Spirit, making the realities of the person and the work and the life and the provision of Jesus Christ our portion, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

The Holy Spirit is so involved in sanctification, so involved in the new covenant of grace. Walking, that's the sanctification process. Step by step, day by day, wanting to be more and more made like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Less and less living out of our flesh, our humanity, the way we would naturally do it, even if our natural best for God was pulled upon. Instead, walking in the Spirit. Verse 18.

But if you are led by the Spirit, you're not under the law. What is the implication there? If you're led by the Spirit, you're not under the law. Well, if you're led by the flesh, you're back into works of the law.

Even though you were saved by grace, practically speaking, in your daily Christian life, you've fallen into the practice of living by works of the flesh, works of the law. Trying to please God, impress Him, grow and improve by your own resources and best effort. Verse 22.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. The fruit of the Spirit, that which only the Spirit of God can produce. How do our lives become loving? Loving like Christ, and as some have suggested, thereby manifesting God's joy and peace and long-suffering and kindness and goodness and all the rest.

How does that happen? What kind of regimen do you have to pull upon yourself, force yourself through, extrude your flesh through to make it come out looking like that? Well, there isn't anything to go through. The flesh must go to a dead-end street, the cross, no to self, death to self, and put our hope in the Spirit of God, depend on the Spirit of God, be led and empowered by the Spirit of God, and the Holy Spirit produces the fruit. How hard does the flesh have to try to have a love like Christ, a joy that's of God, a peace that passes understanding, to be long-suffering, be marked by kindness and goodness and faithfulness, reliability, gentleness, self-control.

There's a great one. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. Man's natural way would be self-control, you just bear down, you just bite that religious bullet till you stop, you know, works of the flesh.

Self-control, yeah, it's the Holy Spirit controlling self. What does He do with self? Nails it, renders it in the place of the cross, helpless, hopeless, useless, and then new life in Christ flows forth in this vessel that is our lives. Fruit of the Spirit.

How hard does a branch have to strain to produce a grape? You ever been by a vineyard, you can just hear them and they're groaning. How hard does a Christian have to be like Jesus Christ? Yes, we groan, even we ourselves. It's because we're part of a fallen creation.

We're not groaning to try and manufacture a Christ-like life. We're groaning because we can't. But praise God, by the Spirit it comes, that new life in Christ.

Verse 25, if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. If we've come alive by the Spirit, if we found life by the Spirit, let's function day by day by the Spirit, grow by the Spirit, serve by the Spirit. Spiritual life and ministry.

One more quote before we take a break. This one is from page 80. If you've been reading the text and have gotten this far, and I would encourage you to do that, maybe you remember this story on page 80 of Pastor Chuck telling of a seeming great defeat he went through in his life trying to minister to someone in need.

A friend of the family, a wife called, asked Pastor Chuck if he'd go visit her wayward husband who had run off to live with some woman. Chuck says, I agreed to go and found my deep friend living in a shabby garage apartment, bad side of town. Saw this filthy little home and was struck by what the man had lost.

And he said it was as though he had sold his soul for a crust of bread. He came inside and began to look at this man, his situation, wondering how he could give up so much for so little. His heart, he said, was breaking because he loved this man.

The sight of what he was into tore Pastor Chuck apart. He said he couldn't hide his feelings, and much to my embarrassment, I began to weep. He was overcome with grief.

And then he said, this partner in fornication, this lady came out of the kitchen. Then he started sobbing. You know, he saw that.

He saw the impact of all this just kind of hit him in the face. So he said to them, out of great embarrassment, I'm very sorry. I know I came over to see you, but I just can't talk right now.

He got up and left, went home, quote, feeling like a fool. Here my good friend's wife wanted me to visit him and make an appeal for reconciliation. And all I could do was sit there and cry.

The next morning, the phone rang. The news on the phone call shocked him. His friend had returned to his wife and family just hours after Pastor Chuck had been there.

Chuck asked this. What did God use to achieve this miraculous healing of a fractured relationship? Not a holier-than-thou attitude, to be certain. His spirit had created in me a spirit of meekness and brokenness that led to a joyful reconciliation.

I thought I had blundered terribly, Chuck wrote, but I discovered that whenever we choose to walk in the spirit, God delights to work powerfully in stunning and unexpected ways. How would the flesh envision you walking into that messed up situation? With a word straight from heaven? Smoke of lightning still on your garment as you came down from the mountain, you know, bold and you're going to straighten this out and boy, do you have a word for them? And they're liable to be on their knees and pleading repentance within 90 seconds, you know, that's how the flesh likes to envision it. And you walk out of there, you know, carrying this man back to his wife and, oh, she'll just be wringing your neck off with thanksgiving.

What a man of God. Instead, what happened? He breaks down and cries. He's embarrassed.

He thinks he's been totally useless there. But obviously, by his confession and the fruit, he went there in meek humility, depending on the spirit of God to work. And though he felt he was defeated, God used what looks so weak and foolish and inept to crush that man's heart and send him back home.

Going on with God. It's about the spirit of God. Sure, there may be moments like Elijah, where in the name of God, by the spirit of God, we call fire down from heaven and hundreds of false prophets scatter.

But there may be as many or more times as in the face of impossibility, we just weep in brokenness. But it doesn't matter. If our heart's depending on the Lord, God will work in either moment.

Going on with God. Sanctification. It's as much about the spirit of God at work as is justification and starting out with God.

All right, let's take a 10 minute break, shall we? And then we'll return right here.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/11/SID11342.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bob-hoekstra/growing-in-the-grace-of-god-07-the-holy-spirit-covenant-part-1/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**