

Walking in the Spirit - Bruce Wilkenson

by From the Pulpit & Classic Sermons

Bruce Wilkinson's sermon emphasizes the crucial role of the Holy Spirit in living a fulfilling spiritual life and the need for believers to embrace this gift.

Duration: 59:00

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 16:13, Acts 13:2, Ephesians 5:18-21

Topics: "Radio"

Description

In this sermon, Bruce Wilkinson addresses the common struggle among seminary students and Christians in general, of not knowing how to discern the will of God and live a spiritual life. He emphasizes the importance of relying on the teachings of the Bible and not just intellectual knowledge. Wilkinson presents seven things that the Bible says the Holy Spirit will do in the life of a believer, including guiding, teaching, and empowering them. He encourages the audience to assess their own spiritual growth and challenges them to fully embrace the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Transcript

Welcome to From the Pulpit in Classic Sermons. Each week we bring you a different message from some of history's greatest speakers in the Christian faith and powerful sermons from modern preachers too. This week we have Bruce Wilkinson with this message, Walking in the Spirit.

As the president of Walk with the Bible Ministries, I'm very convinced that the series we've prepared is exactly the one I'm supposed to give for you. At a large seminary in our country recently they gave the seniors who had studied four years postgraduate, before they walked across the platform to get their sheepskin, they gave them a questionnaire and they asked them, what would you love to know that you don't know but you think you should have known by this time in your seminary career since it's over? What's bothering you the most? What questions do you have the most? These are seniors, four years. Question number one, how do you know the will of God? Question number two, how on earth do you live the spiritual life? Now I don't know about you but when I heard that, realizing that these are the people that then go and pastor our churches and lead Christian organizations, they come out after four years of study saying, I don't know how to find the will of God and I don't know how to live the spiritual life.

I can give you the doctrines of the Bible, tell you what the Bible says, but I don't know how to do it. I would like to talk to you about how to live the spiritual life in a different way than perhaps you're going to expect tonight. And I want you to open your hearts a little bit and don't make up your mind about what I'm saying

unless it's from the Bible and you can see it for yourself.

And I believe all the pieces will come together by Sunday morning. A.W. Tozer, who's one of my favorite authors, I've read all of his 17 books I could find, has a great story in one of his books about the fact of the normal church, a normal Christian. We get together, he says, and we go out in the woods and we gather some rocks and we put together an altar and then we cut down a tree and we chop it up and put the wood on top of the altar.

Then we go and we find an ox and we slay the ox, we chop it up, put on top of the altar, and then we gather together. And then we sing about the altar, we discuss the wood, we rearrange the sacrifice, we take up a collection about the next time we're going to do this, and then on the way home we say to each other, you know, I sense there was something missing. And Tozer in his own inimitable way says, what we forgot is the point of the rocks and the wood and the sacrifice is the fire that's supposed to come down from heaven and devour it like Elijah.

He said, we have made our faith, our religion, our Christianity, and I'd like to say our spiritual life, so many times right but empty. And that's what this conference is all about. Now I'm going to kind of back up a little bit and take an indirect route to where I'm going.

When I think about God, one of the things that I think about him is that he's a giver and that he gives us different gifts. And I listed a few gifts that he gave to us as recorded in Scripture. One, obviously, is the Scripture.

This is a gift. All Scripture is given by God. This is a gift from God.

We didn't earn it, he gave it to us. Second thing that comes to my mind is that the Jesus Christ is a gift from God. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.

So the Savior is a gift. I remember Ephesians talks about the fact that he himself gave to the church spiritual leaders, pastors, teachers. Your pastor is a gift from God to you.

He may not be the perfect gift you think in your mind, but he is the gift for your church at this time. God also says that he gives gifts to all believers, called spiritual gifts. That has nothing to do with anything we have to say.

We don't even know about it when we become a Christian, but he sovereignly, as he wills, gives to all of us a gift. And that salvation itself is a gift, not of works less people could boast. And then he gave something called the Spirit.

He gave us the Spirit in our hearts, in our lives. Those are six gifts. There are many others, but those are six of them.

Now what happens to a person who doesn't open the gift that God gives? He gave salvation to everyone. Are there any consequences? It's not his will that any should perish. Is there any consequence to the world who chooses not to open the gift of salvation? Is it a free gift offered to all? Yes.

Can whosoever will take it? Yes, I believe they can. I believe that verse. But the tragedy is that some people don't take the gift for whatever reason, and they don't have any of the benefits that follow it, eternal benefits.

Here's another gift. Many people you and I know are born again. They took that gift and they have half a dozen at least Bibles of all colors and stripes, but they don't open it, except on Sundays.

They carry it as if there's power in the carry, but they don't open it. And therefore, do they receive the benefit of the gift that God gave? They didn't receive the benefit. You take a look at every single gift that I've just mentioned, and we have a choice whether to take the gift and to use the gift.

And each one of those gifts have a tremendous negative consequence if we don't unwrap it and use it, because it has of no value. Now the gift that I want to talk about is the gift of the Spirit in here. I want to talk about the spiritual life, not the Christian life, but the spiritual life.

And the spiritual life is based upon the gift of the Spirit given by God the Father. It's interesting, of all of the subjects in Christianity that will divide a group of people that quick, it's the gift of the Spirit. It's not the gift of salvation, it's not the gift of Christ, it's not the gift of spiritual leaders, or many other things.

But you talk about the Holy Spirit among Christians, and you'll typically get in one heated conversation. In fact, around the world there is not another subject that split more churches than the Holy Spirit. Now why is that true? Obviously we know from Scripture that carnality brings division, and when churches split there's great sin in the camp.

And the goal of the Holy Spirit is to unify, therefore he is stopped and cannot, for whatever reason, bring unity. And the church splits and many tragedies occur. Why is there such attack on the Spirit? And who is attacking the truth about the Spirit? I believe Satan is a strategic thinker, and has a plan, and leverages his activities, and is very, very careful in where he invests his strikes against us.

I personally believe that the number one place that the enemy attacks is about the Holy Spirit. I do not believe you and I, normally, would find ourselves arguing about the Spirit, any more than we would argue about the Bible. But we find ourselves not really understanding the Spirit.

I listen a lot to people, and I watch, and I try to learn. And you'll watch people talk, Christian people, talk, when you think about the spiritual life, they'll talk about the Bible first, and then they'll talk about prayer second, then they'll talk about, usually not a clear third, maybe service, maybe giving, maybe discipling, but it's the Bible, prayer, other things. And if you're in a typical evangelical group, the Holy Spirit is rarely mentioned on the list.

Am I speaking the truth, or am I exaggerating? How many say, well, this is probably true. Good. I think so too.

Now, let's say you had a choice. Let's say you could have Jesus Christ here to be with you and us, or you could have the Spirit, and you only can have one. Let's vote.

All right? It's not a hard question. There's only two choices, A or B. If you had the choice. Now, don't, just be honest.

It's not a hard question. How many wants Jesus Christ? It's a tricky question. It's not meant to be a hard question.

You got your defenses up too soon. I've tried this on people, and every one of the persons says, Jesus Christ, of course. And when you ask the question, why? Well, because he'd be right there, and I can talk to

him.

What else? Well, he can teach me. Well, what else? And the list goes on. In other words, Jesus is helpful, and the Spirit is good, and I believe in him, and he lives in me.

But when you compare what Jesus can do for me and what the Holy Spirit can do for me, there's no contest here. I'll take Jesus any day. Now, if I hadn't given you this introduction, the vast majority of you would have said the same thing.

The problem is, Jesus says the exact opposite. That's the shocker. Jesus said, if you were to pick between me and him, it is to your advantage to pick him.

It is to your advantage to pick him. It is to your advantage to pick him. If you don't pick him, or you don't know him very much, you haven't unwrapped the gift that is overwhelmingly, from Jesus' point of view, more advantageous to the believer today than his presence.

Let's see if we can't see that ourselves in the book of John, chapter 14. John chapter 14. I'll be reading out of the New King James.

It's my favorite translation. John chapter 14 is obviously the upper room discourse, and most of it's in red, because Jesus spoke it, and he speaks in red. John 14.

Verse number 16. Jesus speaking and says, I will pray the Father, and he will give you, now watch carefully, another helper that he may abide with you, look at this next word, forever. Who is the other helper? Even the Spirit of truth.

The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him, nor knows him, but you know him, for he dwells with you, but he's gonna dwell where? In you. Now, some people think, in practical terms, when you push them in a corner, there's really only two parts of the Trinity. There's God the Father, God the Son, and the Spirit of the Son.

God the Father, Jesus, and the Spirit of Jesus. Let's just kind of put that away, that's false teaching. There are three parts of the Trinity, there's one God, but Jesus is going, and he is going to send another comforter, who is with you, but is going to be in you.

It's not the same as Jesus, it's not the same as Jesus, and we'll prove that to you in a moment, but don't confuse that. Look further on that chapter, chapter 14, verse number 26, now we receive his name, or the name he is called, we don't really know his name, but the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, now I get some help here, he will teach you all things. Did Jesus teach him all things? Did Jesus teach them all things? If you knew the Gospel of John, what's the answer? No, he didn't have time, and you weren't ready, so he did not teach all things.

So from Jesus' point of view, I'm sending the Spirit back to you, because he's going to be in you, and I can't be in you, I'm on the outside of you, and when we go to bed at night, we can't talk, because I'm sleeping, and if John takes me on a fishing trip, and you want to talk to me, you can't get a hold of me, and besides that, I'm only here for a few years, and I'm gone, I'm gonna die, and I'm gonna send somebody else who's gonna teach you everything. So Jesus did not teach them everything, he's gonna send somebody else who will teach him everything. Jesus was not on the inside, he was on the outside, and next passage is John 15, verse number 26, but when the Helper or Comforter, the Paracletos, comes,

whom I shall send to you from the Father, so Jesus sometimes says I send them, and sometimes he says the Father sends them, together they're doing this, the Spirit of Truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify of me.

Now where is he going to be? Inside of you, and what is he gonna do? He's gonna tell you about me, because you don't know everything about me, you only know this much about me. So the Holy Spirit's gonna tell the person who's this being talked to more about Jesus than they know. Interesting.

What Jesus didn't say was, I'm gonna write everything about me in a book. It's interesting. I'm gonna send somebody inside of you who will testify to you about me.

Now about now, you're probably becoming a little bit uncomfortable and wondering where's he going? I'm going through John. I believe we're attacking right where the enemy is fighting and winning, big time, and the truth sets us free. All I want to do to us is read the truth verse by verse and prove it to all of us what Jesus says.

Please don't box around what he says, he's real clear. I'm leaving and I'm sending somebody in my place. He was on the outside, he's gonna be in the inside.

He'll teach you all things, he'll testify of me. It's pretty clear. Don't change his words, don't misinterpret them, just take them the way he said it.

It's kind of clear. Chapter 16 verse 7, this is a critical verse that we're on right now and I want you to see it for yourself. John 16 verse 7. Nevertheless, Jesus said, I tell you the truth.

Go back up to verse 6, excuse me, verse 5. But now I go away to him who sent me and none of you ask me where you're going, but because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Look here for a minute. So the disciples are saying, Jesus is leaving and we'll, think about this selfishly for a minute, we'll be worse off without him.

Not only will we be lonely and we'll miss him, but who's gonna make the bread and all the other things. So they're feeling disadvantaged, sense of loss. That's why Jesus goes right on in the next verse and says exactly what he wants.

Nevertheless, nevertheless, even though you do have sorrow, and you should, I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away. It's better for you that I go away. It is my belief, after counseling hundreds and hundreds of people, that it is not the average evangelical Christian's advantage experientially.

That when you question an evangelical person about what the Holy Spirit actually did for you yesterday. What did you do last week? Well, what good is it that he's in you? Oh, he's sealed me until I'm dead. Great.

So what? Are you with me? Now, let's get a little more practical here. I travel a lot and speak a lot. I go in certain churches, these are both evangelical, not liberal.

And the Bible is preached solidly, and it's dead in church. And everybody but the preacher may know it. And even he may know it.

It's lifeless, verse by verse. The truth is being given. You feel more tired when you leave, than when you came.

And you go at a sense of an obligation. But the Bible was preached, and it was. I go to churches, just as evangelical, and you walk in the door, and you feel it.

You feel what? Some of you snuck around. What do you feel? You feel a little bit up. That's one thing you feel, just speaking it secularly to you.

You feel a little electric in the place. Like some people in here are alive. And then when they start to sing, what do you find yourself doing? You find yourself singing, and you find yourself praising God.

In the other church, you sing the hymns of the faith, but if you praise God, it's because you did it. In this church, there's a lot of handshakes and pats on the back. On this church, what is there? A lot of what? Hugs.

What else? Laughter. What else? Tears. Spontaneous.

Fixed. Predictable to the minute. Unpredictable.

Which side do you feel more loved? Hello? I'm not going by myself down this road. Which side do you feel more loved? We don't know what this side is, because we've not decided to describe it, except the results of it. This side exalts Christ.

This side exalts Christ. This side preaches the Bible a little differently than this side. This side preaches the Bible.

This side does one additional thing. It recognizes the Spirit. This side has the doctrine of the Spirit.

Now, there are excesses on both sides. I'm not saying this is the right side, because that's not my point here. Many people on this side believe, unless you speak in tongues, you're not born again.

That's heresy. That's what I would call that. Anybody who changes the definition of salvation is heretical.

That's clearly not scriptural. Other people would say, you aren't fully sanctified until you speak in tongues. But the scripture is clear when it says, not all speak in tongues.

So they're wrong as well. But there's a lot of things on this side that are very right. And that's the part I want to talk about.

We've taken this whole bucket and thrown it away. And there was something in the bucket called the Spirit of God. And we put it away.

And with it, listen to me very carefully, we've lost the number one power to live the spiritual life. Number one. Nothing close.

There's God in us. Therefore, it is my thesis tonight, that evangelical Christianity has neglected the gift of the Spirit that Jesus said, it is to your advantage that I leave. He's better in you than me with you.

And the next question you should be asking if you're there tonight, and you haven't done this too hard with me, is you'd be saying to yourself, well, what does the Bible, not what does Bruce or what does this group of people, because those two are irrelevant. The only thing that's relevant is, what does the Bible say? If the Bible says some things you don't believe, what will you do? Yeah, but what will you do? Well, that's what we're going to be working on. It's hard work for you and for me, because the Bible is very clear.

And I'll give you, we'll go through a lot of verses in the next few moments. It's clear as a bell. And I think many of us don't believe what it says, because we have taken this bucket, thrown everything about this in the bucket, and when we read it, we don't see it.

And when we see it, we don't believe it. And therefore, when you ask the average evangelical Christian, what difference is that if we took the spirit out of your life tomorrow morning, what difference would it have made last month to you? The average person's mouth falls open, gets dry, and nods. There should be a good answer to that, but I don't know.

Now, I'm going to go through seven, seven things. There's more than seven, but seven's perfect. There are seven things that I want to review for you that the Bible says the spirit will do in the life of a believer.

And as we go through these seven things, I'm going to ask you to do something a little bit challenging. Next to each one of these seven, I want you to write it down, write down the verse. And then I want you to put a number next to each one of these seven, between one and seven, for yourself.

Do a little bit of self-examination. It's my conviction, listen carefully, that we have quenched the spirit so he doesn't speak in our lives, and we think it's the norm. We state it again.

It is my belief that we have quenched, turned him down, the spirit, and we now think that how we live is the norm for Christians. The only way it's a norm is if it matches one by one with what the Bible teaches. In testing this last week here, not quite so carefully as I'm doing tonight, the average person in the audience realized going through these seven, hardly any of these are true about me.

But the spirit dwells within them. If you can be honest with yourself, I want you to find out how much of your life would demonstrate to you, that the spirit has been to your advantage. And therefore, as I give each one of these seven, give yourself a little number.

If you say, this isn't true of me at all, go zero. If you say, this is true all the time about me, give a seven. And then you have a score in between to give what you'd like to do.

Don't look at anybody else's, or you will go blind. Let's take an easy one, because they're going to get hard. Number one, what's one thing the spirit does, he says anyway, in the lives of believers.

Number one, he produces the fruit of the spirit. Number one, write that down, produces the fruit of the spirit, and put down next to it, one passage. I'll only take one.

Galatians chapter five, verse 22 and 23. And then take your Bibles. I know many of you traveled the long way tonight, but we need to, this is the introduction for tomorrow night.

You need to get into this. So do as best as you can to follow me, and I'll see if I can encourage you. Galatians chapter five, verse 22 and 23.

Well known, we all memorize this verse a million times, but I want to read it. It says, but the fruit of the spirit, the fruit of the spirit, not of the scriptures. Hello, not of the scriptures.

It's the fruit of the spirit. Is that what it say in your Bible? This is an easy one. The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace.

So that means that if I'm, if the spirit is active in me, you will say about me, that person is loving all the time. They will say, how come you're filled with joy? They will say, what gives you that deep peace? And it seems like no matter what's going on, you have peace in your life. And your ability to suffer long through things, and that you have kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, that you are filled with gentleness.

You have a great deal of self-control. This passage bothered me for years. I thought it should say, but the fruits of the spirit are, because I could have one or two of these at a given moment and feel like I'm doing okay.

But it says, no, there's only one outgrowth of the spirit if he's active in your life. And this is, listen to me now, this is what he looks like when he's doing it. He doesn't have a divided personality, and he's not dysfunctional.

It's the spirit. And this is the nature of the spirit. And therefore, if the spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, is fully released in my life and your life, then this is what the spirit will look in me, and I'll see it, and you'll see it more than I'll see it.

Now, I used to think for years, because this was my training, that it's really the fruit of determination and self-control. And memorizing Scripture, how to slip that in, is the way that you get the fruit of the spirit. The only problem is, nowhere in Scripture does it say that.

It says it's the fruit of the spirit. There appears to be two ways to try and get the fruit of the spirit. One is, the way I did most of my life, which is, through self-control and through renewing my mind, I will act this way if it kills me.

How many of you can identify with me? I'm out on a limb a little bit. Are the rest of you not identifying? You fall asleep. What is the issue here? How many of you can identify with me? Good, thank you.

The rest of you are lying. I'm only kidding. This passage has a different concept, and we'll teach about this in a couple more days.

It has the concept that says, no, it is not in the flesh. You do not do the fruit of the spirit through your flesh, even well-meaning flesh. You get the flesh out of the way, and if it's out of the way adequately, and you're cooperating with Him, these will be true, all of them, in your life at the time.

Now put a number between one and seven down. If you think you're doing really well, give a 7.5. Number two, the spirit teaches, the spirit teaches, teaches you, all right, you personally. There's three verses I want you to write down.

Number one, John 16, 13, John 16, 13. Let's turn and take a look at these one at a time. John 16, 13.

Verse 12, Jesus speaking again, I still have many things to say to you, but you, the listener now, cannot bear them now. So that means the teacher, which was Jesus, had a lot of content and understanding to give to the people, but they were unable to cope with it. We've all experienced that many times.

Therefore, Jesus is a bit thwarted in what He wanted to do, but you can't bear it. If you could bear it, I'd give you more, right? However, however, when He, the Spirit of Truth, has come, He will guide you, He will guide you into all truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears, He will speak, and He will tell you things to come. You not only know what gift He's given to you, but you know

that is the most important thing for you to be doing, because He sovereignly gave it to you.

He's going to use it in you, sovereignly, and I believe supernaturally, to accomplish His will. It is the manifestation of the Spirit. People would say, you didn't do that.

You were, that was the Spirit in you. Yes, of course it was. See the difference? Now, you know what your spiritual gift is? Are you supernaturally, do you see the Spirit coming out when you use it, and do other people affirm that in you, or is it, well, it's like a carry-away now.

The manifestation of the Spirit, right, that's what it says. A natural talent is the manifestation of my strengths. Supernatural gift is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, and they're not the same.

They're not even related many times. Do you have that? Do you know what it is? Do you use it, and do other people acknowledge, boy, God's using you in a mighty way, or is it kind of, I'm not too sure about this stuff. And when is this over? Put a number.

One to seven. Am I going through Bible passages or making this stuff up? Is this Bible or not? It's Bible. Now, here's one.

Hold on. The Spirit speaks to you. The Spirit speaks, different than teaching.

John chapter 16, verse 13. Let me ask you a question. Was the Spirit just given to the twelve disciples and apostles? No.

It's given to all of us, equally. Interesting. John 16, verse 13, says this.

However, when he, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak, S-P-E-A-K, speak on his own authority. He mustn't be speaking now. He'd do a better job of it.

Oh, my. How are you doing with all this tonight? Is this all right? I want all of it. All the Bible teaches.

I don't want to get to heaven's gate and find the Lord saying, you missed, you missed some biggies I had for you. And it was all in Scripture, but because of your blindness and hardness of heart and hard boxes that you felt I couldn't, wouldn't do, you never, you never had it. I want to get there and him to say, good, you got it all.

Now come and get the rest. Yeah. He will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak on his own.

Now look at this. But whatever he hears, he will, what's the word? Speak. And he will, come on, say it.

Tell you. Tell you. Will he tell you with his book? Wait a minute.

This has already been said. That's future tense. He will tell you.

This, he has spoken. This is it. But when he speaks to you, it may or may not be related to something you're in the scriptures about.

It may be, go talk to that person over there right now. And you'll know it. And depending upon how you're relating to the spirit, you may say, no, sir.

But will you know it or not? Yes. Question. Question.

That is meant to happen all the time. How much of this happened in Jesus' life? I don't say anything on my own. I only say that which my father tells me, obviously, through the spirit, as you know.

It's interesting. I mean, God can talk to a believer. Good question.

First Corinthians chapter 12. I'm glad you asked. First Corinthians chapter 12.

This is a surprising verse in the context that we're talking about, but it's carried away with these dumb idols, however you are led. Therefore, I make known to you, said Paul, that no one, watch this, no one speaking by the spirit of God, by the means of the spirit of God, calls Jesus accursed. And no one can say that Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit.

Word I want you to see is speaks by the spirit of God. Next passage. Now, if that was true, that the Holy Spirit speaks, should you be able to find illustrations in the New Testament, not including the apostles and disciples in which the Holy Spirit spoke? Sure, you should.

If you couldn't, then you'd be concerned. Acts chapter 10. This is about one of the apostles, and then we'll broaden it out in a minute.

Acts chapter 10, verse 19. This is the vision that Peter saw of the great sheet with the animals inside. And Acts chapter 10, verse 19.

While Peter thought about the vision, the spirit said to him, Behold, three men are seeking you. Don't miss that. Look up here quickly.

Here's Peter thinking. So his mind is preoccupied. He is actively processing what he just saw, what it means.

So he's not making the voice in himself. Some people think that this whole thing is false, that it's all your own words. Well, you can have some, and you can make yourself sound like you're talking to the spirit, and you can have some vain imaginations.

Those are all true, right? But the other truth is, the spirit speaks, and you must learn to hear him yourself. And at the beginning, you'll make all kinds of mistakes, unless you've been walking with the spirit, and you'll hear him. How much? You can't make him talk, but more than you ever would dream.

Acts chapter 10, verse 19. While Peter thought about the vision, the spirit said to him, Behold, three men. Now look how he says that himself, when he talked to somebody else about what happened to him.

Acts 11, verse 12. He's explaining it. And verse 11.

At that very moment, three men, said Peter, he's explaining to some other people. Three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. Then the spirit told me to go with him.

So what happened inside of this man, Peter? Somehow he knew, the spirit said, go with him, and he went. Peter, why are you going? Because that's what the Lord wants me to do. How do you know that? Sometimes that's hard to explain, but I just know.

That's exactly how it happens. How often does the spirit say words? Very, very, very, very rarely. But does he speak? Yes.

And your spirit knows it. Go speak to him. He didn't say the words, but you knew.

You're supposed to speak to that one person, and you know it. Is that true or false? How many have had at least one time in your life that you know the spirit said, you go do that? Raise your hand. Oh, so there's no doubt then that that's true.

There's no doubt that it's true. You can't say that's not true, or else you've all been fooled, and I'm joining with you. But we haven't been fooled.

But the issue is, on this side of the box, we don't understand that the will of God is to lead us and speak to us a lot. Instead, all of a sudden, he's yelling, hey, you, the one who never talks to me. I'm here.

Please go talk to him. I think I heard a voice. Take a look at Acts chapter 8. Acts chapter 8, verses 26 to 29.

This is Philip. Now, here we have Philip, we have an angel, and we have the spirit, all in the same story. This is a great illustration.

Now, an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip. Well, angels can speak to people, of course, saying, arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza. This is the desert.

So he arose and he went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, eunuch of great authority, under Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians, had come, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.

Then the spirit said to Philip, go near and overtake this chariot. Does the Bible teach that the spirit speaks? Did Jesus say he did? Yes. Did Paul say he did? Yes.

Did Peter experience it? Yes. Did Philip experience it? Yes. Let's get more people experiencing it.

Acts chapter 13, verse number 2. This is when the first missionaries are being sent out from this particular church in Antioch. As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, now separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I've called them. Question, does the Bible teach that the spirit speaks to believers? Yes or no? Yes.

Yes. Good. Write a number.

How often does that occur in your life? Number five, the spirit causes us to praise and to thank. The spirit causes us to praise and to thank. Two verses.

First one, Ephesians chapter 5, verses 18 to 21. It's a classic passage. We'll talk all about this on Sunday morning.

How to do this? Don't be drunk with wine, in which there's dissipation, but filled with the spirit. Now what does it look like when you're filled with the spirit? You will be doing the following things. Number one, you'll be speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

Number two, you'll be singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. So a person who's filled with the spirit finds himself humming and singing to the Lord when nobody else is around. Frequently.

Number 20, verse 20, what else will they be doing? They'll be giving thanks always for all things to God. What do you mean? That means that regardless what happens, their immediate response is, Lord thank you for this. This is for my good.

I believe it. I believe you're in control and I thank you because this is out of your good hand to me. And number 21, it says, submitting to one another the fear of God.

That means when you are filled with the spirit, you are not obstinate. You are not stubborn. You are not hard to get along with.

You submit to one another easily, easily. Now, those four characteristics of speaking that way, singing that way, thanking that way and submitting to each other. How often is that true about you? Or do you have to think a long time? I can't remember the last time I was singing.

I'm so bogged down at work or my kids are really a problem. Our marriage is strained and I just don't find myself doing that. And my husband and I, we never submit to each other.

And guess what? If you're filled with the spirit, those things are true about you. If you're not filled with the spirit, those things are not true about you. And you can't remember the last time.

And people say, that person's hard to get along with. So put a number down. It's getting a little convicting in here.

Number six, the spirit leads us. He teaches, he speaks and he leads. The spirit leads.

Romans chapter 8, verse number 13 and 14. Romans 8, 13 and 14. But if you live according to the flesh, you will die.

But if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. Look up here for a minute. This isn't one of the points here, but it's a major one.

Remember I tried to share a minute ago with how do you have the fruit of the spirit? And there's two ways. One is you try to do it through your own determination. And the other way, you do not do it through your own determination because you realize you can't do the work of God for him.

That's why it says in that verse, but if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you can't put the deeds of the body to death by determination, by your determination, by your will, by your self-control, it will not happen. It is by the spirit who does that in you. That's why he continues in verse 14, but as many as are led by the spirit, these are the sons of God.

Galatians 5, 18, I won't turn to it, is another passage that talks about the same thing. And then turn to one passage and we'll move on to the last one. Acts chapter 16, Acts chapter 16.

I have used this passage in my own life more times. In fact, this afternoon, this morning, I was writing a letter because the Lord had done this to me in our organization and it was hard to deal with. Acts chapter 16, verse 6. Now, when they had gone through Phrygia in the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the spirit to preach the word in Asia.

Now, how did that happen? I think if the Lord had spoken to them, it had said that, that the spirits told them not to do it, but it was forbidden by the Holy Spirit. Verse 7, after they'd come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia. Therefore, I think Paul would have said, Paul, why are you doing this? Why are you going to Bithynia? Well, I think that's where we should go, probably.

They tried to go into Bithynia, but the spirit didn't permit them. I don't know how this happened, but perhaps it was they were out on the road and Paul stops and says, wait, we can't go. What do you mean we can't go? We're not supposed to go.

How do you know we're not supposed to go? I don't know. We're just not supposed to go. He leads you and he guides you.

A very close friend was driving home and out of the blue into his mind came the idea, go see this family. And this young man said, I don't know where the family lives. Go see the family.

I don't know where they live. Go see the family. So this young man drives his car.

I think it's over there. So he goes down into a development. He's driving along.

This is right. This is right. Makes a left hand turn, goes a little bit further, makes a right hand turn.

No, he stops. He backs up. He goes further down and he goes to a cul-de-sac.

Go to this person's house. Where do they live? He gets out of his car and starts up the driveway. It's not it goes over to the other house, walks up and knocks the door.

It's the person's house. It's the man of the house. The man of the house opens the door and said, I can't believe it.

God sent you and you're a young man. This young man who was 18 said, why am I here? The man said, because I was upstairs on my knees begging God to send a deacon or an elder to tell our family what to do. And this young man said, then let's meet.

So he went in, got this man and the wife and the three kids and they spent more than two hours on their knees. And as a result of it, their whole family completely changed. Now, this is something I know all about.

This is not a made up story or one I read in a book. This is, I know about. Does that happen all the time? No, but there are certain people you're around who walk so close to the spirit that they do the most uncanny things at times.

Why are you sitting there? I don't know, but somebody's going to come and sit down. Somebody's going to come with who? I don't know. Lo and behold, they come and sit down and leave them to Christ.

Does that happen a lot? Yeah. How do you know? I just know. Does the spirit lead? Holy Spirit forbid us to go.

Holy Spirit let us to go. How does it happen in your spirit? That's how it happens. Does it go like this? No, it doesn't.

No, it doesn't. No, it doesn't. It goes through the spirit in you.

That's how it happens. Number seven. The spirit has fellowship with you.

This is the last one. The spirit has fellowship with you. It communes.

He, not it. He communes with you and me. Two passages.

Number one, second Corinthians chapter 13 verse 14, second Corinthians chapter 13 verse 14. It's a famous verse. Second Corinthians 13 14 says the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God in the fellowship or communion, same word of the Holy Spirit question.

What does it mean to have fellowship with another person? Is it a one way street? It's a two way street. Is the Holy Spirit wanting to have fellowship with you personally? You bet. How much? A lot.

Romans 8 verse 15. Romans 8 verse 15 and 16. It's a very special verse to many folks.

Romans 8 15 and 16. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you receive the spirit of adoption by whom we cry out. Abba father, the spirit himself.

Look at this verse bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, your spirit and his spirit in the same body, having fellowship together. And nobody has to tell you that you know it and it's real. Don't stop seeking.

There's a lot more. Count your numbers up. You'd have a number between zero and seven for all seven.

Add those all together. A perfect score would be 49. Take that number, multiply it times two and you'll have a score.

Highest scores possible is the 98. Now, if you have been walking with the spirit, your score would have been between about an 80 and a 98. If you have taken the truth of scripture and denied it, your score is going to be below a 30, 60.

Unless I misread this exercise, there's more than one of us who scored below a 60. How can this possibly be? Here's how it can possibly be. I read this in a book written by Dr. Louis Sperry Chaffer, the founder of Dallas.

On page 56 of his book, he has a little paragraph in the book called He That Is Spiritual that made this whole thing start to think in my mind. He said, there are two separate things that we must never bring together as one. And I don't know if these are the right words.

I've tried to come up with more appropriate ones and haven't been able to yet. Maybe one of you can help me. He calls this side spiritual maturity.

And he says, spiritual maturity is how much you know of the word, what kind of service you have, how much wisdom you have from the word over a long period of time. You can only become mature in Christ over time and with effort and through self-discipline and through memorization and reading and journaling and praying and all the rest of it. On the other side, he said, is another whole area called, he used the word, spirituality.

He said this, and I fully agree with him. When a person becomes a believer, they in no way can become spiritually mature that day. Impossible.

It takes years. On this side, however, if the person who accepts Christ is rightly related to the spirit, they can be full of the spirit like that and have full spirituality. This is only dealing with the spirit and our relationship to him.

This is to do with all of the other disciplines of life. We're here this weekend to talk to a group who has the spiritual disciplines of life down pat. The navigators are par excellence and I don't know of any other group above you guys in this half of it.

My calling to be with you this weekend, as I've prayed about this, was to share with you the other half. In case there may be a few of us in this room who say to ourselves, I have a feeling I have a lot to learn about spirituality. Is it worth it to learn on this side how to be led by the spirit, be taught by the spirit, be in communion with the spirit, to be filled with the fruit of the spirit, to have joy and thanksgiving and easy submission? If it is, then maybe you'll be here tomorrow night.

As a person who lived most of my life on this side, and now have in the past three years been wedding this side to it. It's wonderful. And it is true.

It is to your advantage, therefore, to be at the Navigator's Presence Council and to learn together what the scripture teaches about how to be filled with the spirit and to walk by means of the spirit and to enjoy all the fullness of the spirit in your life, because that's why Jesus sent the spirit into your life. May you hunger after him and more of him, because you realize deeply and personally don't stop seeking. There's a lot more.

Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, forgive our unbelief because that is the sin which the enemy has used to confuse us. We believe what you have said in these 50 verses, one after the other, after the other, after the other.

They're clear. The Holy Spirit is a person. The Holy Spirit lives within us if we know Christ.

And as far as Jesus Christ is concerned, he is the teacher. He is the testifier. He is the guider.

He is the leader. He is the commuter. And we thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

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