

Phase 2: Life To The Full, "Walking In The Spirit"

John 10:10 says "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; (The Devil will try to provide any substitute to prevent a relationship with God because that is the source of life and to the full.) I (Jesus) have come that they (you & me) may have life and have it to the full" (meaning: love, peace, joy, purpose and fulfillment now here on earth John 10:10 and in eternity John 3:16). People try in many ways to attain this and though money can't buy it, it is available to all Christians. By trusting in God you can enjoy the fruit of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control against such things there is no law" (Gal 5:22, 23).

God desires for us and we need to have a relationship and be fulfilled in Him. In our attempts to fill that need on our own we find many disappointments, frustrations and pain in life. Our nature is to want relief and satisfaction now and when we don't get it to be disappointed and hurt. As time goes on we build up defenses and walls around us to protect us from the disappointment and hurt. This becomes very evident in our relationships. In the garden after their sin Adam and Eve hid and broke their relationship with God. (Gen 3:7-10) God called to the man because He wants relationship. The fig leaves were a type of wall. Though we might not realize it, our lifestyle and motivations can become one of trying to relieve our pain and need for fulfillment and not the real answer to that need, a relationship in dependence on God. When we put our expectations on others or things of this world (our wants and needs) it's a recipe for failure, stress, fear, and anger. If you are hurt, frustrated, or angry then this is a sign you are plugged into one of these things on earth and not God.

To trust God means to demand nothing. Addiction is trying to find comfort when our heart is not full. As we attempt to relieve the painful stress of our failure to have that fulfillment and relationship that only God can provide; habits are developed. Our tendency is to create defenses and walls around us so no one can get in. Those who have been offended can easily become defensive. Defenses close us off. Have you ever been in a discussion with someone and you get him or her on the defensive? Once their self-esteem is at stake and they are trying to protect themselves it's very difficult to get your

point across. This is the same thing that can happen to us in our relationships with others and God. There is a feeling of inadequacy or inferiority (we are not complete without God) bringing about this defense mode and whether depressed or highly motivated we usually aren't even aware of it. Defenses are a denial of feelings. God is our sufficiency. God wants us to have an honest, open, and intimate relationship with Him; this is the source of His strength working through us.

Fear casts out the ability to love; self-protection and Love are opposites. When we are working in our own strength and things don't go our way we can get angry, this makes us vulnerable to the Devil and gives the Devil opportunity for a stronghold in our life (Eph 4:26). It can go from anger to resentment to a root of bitterness (Heb 12:15). Re Sent Ment, it plays over and over again it is resent. Like other temptations to sin, you can stop it by faith, confess and ask forgiveness, forgive others, and give it to Jesus. Forget the resentment or temptation to sin, don't fight or engage it, don't even think about it, leave it behind you and focus on what's before you (Phil 3:12-14). A tactic of the devil is to bring up your past failures to distract you, forget it and press on towards the goal. Using our will to overcome temptation can be like throwing gasoline on a fire, with the temptation and not God becoming the goal. Press on towards the goal: life to the full, "Walking in the Spirit" from an intimate relationship with Jesus. Don't let anything take your eyes off the goal. The next time the resentment or temptation is sent there will be a longer period of time between when it is sent with less intensity. If you don't do this it gets stronger, the resentment can go to bitterness and a state of indifference and isolation, which is the extreme opposite of God's love and desire for relationship.

Resentment towards anyone grows out of a demand that they meet your expectations and depending on them to fill that need and bring you satisfaction, which only God can do. When we are plugged into God His love gives us all we need to be whole and capable of loving others no matter how they act or fail us.

Life To The Full, Walking In The Spirit is finding our fulfillment in God. Then the problems of this world will come and challenge us but never destroy us because our security and adequacy of who we are is based in being plugged into God and not people and the circumstances of life. There's peace and rest walking in the Spirit. The truth will set you free (John 8:32) you are now free to honestly love others demanding nothing.

Life To The Full, Walking In The Spirit has to do with fruit bearing. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). The fruit has to be attached to the vine in order to be born and grow and after that process good fruit is ready to be picked. How do you know an apple tree is an apple tree? It has apples! Fruit is the outward expression of the inward nature. The inward nature of a Christian is Jesus. Fruitfulness is evidence of our connection with Jesus Christ (John 15:1-8, 16).

The branch bears the fruit - the vine produces the fruit, the responsibility for production and results is on the vine (Jn 15:1, 4 & 5). We are not the source of our own sufficiency. The believers are branches of this vine and Christ is the vine and root system. You do not support the root but the root supports you, you share in the nourishing sap. Israel was the natural branches we were grafted in (Rom 11:17- 24).

All true Christians may have many differences yet they are unified in Christ, like branches going in different directions but attached to the same vine and root system.

Those that bear fruit He prunes so they can bear more fruit. He cuts off the hindrances.

Trials strengthen our character and faith, like exercising your muscles: no pain no gain. Reading the word, prayer, listening and trusting God deepens our attachment so we can grow and produce more fruit.

Some more helps to fruitfulness:

*We must admit / confess to our own inability and our need to abide in and attach to Jesus "the vine" (John 15:4).

*Prayer: the life that you do not see determines the life that you do see. The foundation of a building like the roots of a tree determines how tall and stable it can be. What's invisible is the real strength. What's invisible is eternal; what is visible is temporary (2 Cor 4:18). Like radio waves that you can't see, tune your mind (your radio receiver) to the eternal channel, where God is transmitting. The things you can see (the things of this world) are on a temporary channel and it's

trying to suck you into it and it is dying already. The fruit of the Spirit is eternal and you can enjoy it now!

*Worship and praise: the walls come down as we open up and come into alignment with the Spirit of God. This is a place of peace, communion, revelation and intimacy with God. If we filter everything through our spirit in alignment with the Spirit of God then the truth will set us free. If we filter everything through our mind, emotions, and will (this is where the hurts, stress, fear, pain and walls are at) the truth can be affected and altered. Hearing God's voice clearly is not based on our intellect or age but a heart condition that is open, honest and pure walking in the Spirit.

*We must be plugged into the source (remain in, attached to the vine), then we are available and the fruit will be spontaneous and effortless because you aren't doing it, He is through you.

*When our labor is burdensome, heavy, and you feel frustrated, angry, or hurt, no joy it's because we are working out without allowing God to work within. When we let God work Himself and His energy in us then the Lord's burden is light (Col 1:29, Matt 11:30).

*Jesus said: "...any one who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things..." (John 14:12). These greater things come from a pattern of living and being attached to Jesus the vine, our root system and our foundation. Then our inner characteristics will be more like Christ. With total dependence and trust in Him you will bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22,23).

We are powerless and inadequate to do anything eternal without God. Work something that man produces: A product of the flesh. Only God can produce fruit: A product of the Spirit.

If we are striving for security in this life it's hard to serve God lovingly and freely. Release control to Jesus. "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Phil 1:21) Don't strive for this world's values. If you are not ready to die then you are not ready to live. Devote your life to what really counts (eternal values) without fear of death. Be motivated by love not fear. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds (John 12:24). We have to surrender; prayer is a good place to do that. If I surrender my need to control this entire

situation now I can have access to the building of my spirit. If we keep it we lose it. If we lose it we gain. Prayer and yielding takes us beyond the level of our own strength. We can move to a place of surrender and peace, "grace". This is falling into the ground and dying.

Grace is when God gives us something we do not have. We need to walk in a way that enables us to receive God's grace. God does not give us grace when we are clutching on to doing something in our own way. Surrender to God the part that is out of your control, and then you can receive His grace. Strife is I'm going to do it my way.

The root of all sin is self-sufficiency, independence from God (Satan said: "I will make myself like the most high" Isaiah 14:14). When we fail to pray for God's guidance and strength through a relationship with Him we are saying with our actions, if not our lips, that we do not need Him.

I say then walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Gal: 5:16).

The more you trust God the more you will be walking in the Spirit and bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22,23) and become conformed to the image of Christ (Rom 12:2, II Cor 3:18).

God desires to have an intimate relationship with us, but the presence of God and sin in our life don't go together; that's why He made a way to deal with the sin. To walk in the Spirit is a life long process. If (when is more like it) you fall in your walk: (meaning to sin or displease the Lord), confess it to the Lord and He will forgive you (I John 1:9, Prov 28:13) and continue your relationship with the Lord walking in the Spirit. It's like the kid learning to ride a bicycle, if he never gets back on after the first time he falls off he will never learn to ride. He's got to get back on the bike and continue on. The bike ride is uphill and it's always growing and maturing in the Lord. It's impossible to be a Christian without a relationship with God. As we mature in the Lord so will our ability to walk in the Spirit.

Some more helps:

Life can be tough so when it is...

1. Recognize that God can handle our situations if we will just let Him do it.
2. Get your eyes off the situation and back on the Lord. Pray, make the Lord the center of your thinking. The bigger God is in your life the smaller your problems will seem.
3. God's moving on our behalf is in response to our faith not our need (Matt 15:28).
4. Because the situation (battle, II Chron 20:15) is God's. Praise God for the situation now in the midst of the difficulty. What we have is our faith in God. God has a plan and a purpose for your life (Jer 29:11). Know that God never allows a person to be broken down with problems except to build Him up (Rom 8:28).
5. When we are totally attached to the vine (Jesus) we are in obedience to God's will and can receive His promises. We only want and ask for what is God's will and we receive it (1 John 5:14-15).
6. Totally trusting God puts us in a position to experience hope and joy independent of outward circumstances.
7. The key is not a method but a relationship with God.