

# All About Walking by the Spirit

---

 [pursuegod.org/all-about-walking-by-the-spirit/](https://pursuegod.org/all-about-walking-by-the-spirit/)

Writing to the young Galatian church, the Apostle Paul taught several foundational truths to the early Christians there. He started with the facts of the gospel: that we are all broken and in need of a savior, and Jesus went to the cross to make a way for us to become right with God. Having established the truth of salvation by grace through faith ([Galatians 1](#)), Paul finishes his letter on a practical note ([Galatians 5](#)). When we start a relationship with God by trusting Jesus, it affects our everyday habits. As Christians, the fruit of the Spirit should be increasingly evident in our lives. We should learn to, as Paul puts it, “walk by the Spirit”.

But 2000 years later, the Christian church seems a little confused by the idea of walking by the Spirit. How does it actually work? What does it look like in today’s culture? How does it translate into our everyday habits? A careful investigation of the Galatians text gives us the keys.

## Walking by the Spirit is relationship-based

The Christian life is the natural outflow of closeness with a living and active God. Paul uses relational language in chapter 4, explaining that we “know” God and are “known” by him.

**Galatians 4:8-9** *Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more?*

The point is that Christianity isn’t just a religion with a lifeless set of rules. It’s a relationship with a relational God. And just like any healthy relationship, we have a deep desire to honor the other person.

## Walking by the Spirit is Spirit-empowered

Right living is more about God’s effective work in you than about the strength of your personal will power. Paul says in chapter 5 that because of your old sinful nature, you are not “free to carry out your good intentions”.

**Gal 5:16-17** *So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.*

This means you need another power source besides your own will power. That’s the Holy Spirit in you, which you received when you trusted Jesus for salvation ([Ephesians 1:13](#)).

## Walking by the Spirit looks a certain way

The fruit of the Spirit doesn’t change with time, preference or popular culture. If you’re walking by the Spirit, people around you will increasingly notice the “fruit of the Spirit”.

**Galatians 5:22-23a** *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*

## **Walking by the Spirit requires one actual choice at a time**

At the end of the day, walking by the Spirit is a collaborative effort. The Holy Spirit doesn't take over your will and force you to align with him, performing some kind of radical "habit-ectomy".

**Galatians 5:25** *Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.*

Christians are not robots who cannot help but do what God says. Walking by the Spirit is a process. This verse literally says, "walk by the Spirit" and "keep in step with the Spirit" – implying one step at a time, one foot in front of the other, every single day.

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. *Watch the video together or invite someone to summarize the topic.*
2. *What is your initial reaction to this video? Do you disagree with any of it? What jumped out at you?*
3. *Name a person who was radically changed after coming to faith in Jesus. Describe the change.*
4. *Name one or two things that changed in your life after you became a Christian. How long did it take for those things to change?*
5. *What's the difference between relationship-based life change and rule-based change?*
6. *Look at the fruits of the Spirit from [Galatians 5](#). Which one is easiest for you? Which one is hardest?*
7. *Name one or two things that haven't changed in your life, even though you know they should have. Why has it been difficult to change those things?*
8. *Write a personal action step based on this conversation.*