

PURPOSE LIVED

Leader pages on pp. 116-119

THE POINT:
WE LIVE OUT OUR
PURPOSE AS WE ARE
LED AND FILLED WITH
THE SPIRIT.

GALATIANS 5:16-26

¹⁶ I say, then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh.

¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don't do what you want.

¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

.....
¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity,

²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions,

²¹ envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar. I am warning you about these things—as I warned you before—that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

.....
²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

²³ gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things.

²⁴ Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

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MEMORY VERSE

○ — [²⁵ **If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.**

²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

KEYWORDS

Walk (v. 16)—The Greek term for walk (*peripateo*) literally means to physically walk, but here, it references how one lives or conducts oneself.

Led by the Spirit (v. 18)—The verb tense of led (*ago*) indicates that the Spirit's leadership is ongoing in the believer's life.

Works of the flesh (v. 19)

—These are sins that characterize nonbelievers, those who are enslaved to sin. The unchecked "desire of the flesh" leads to the works of the flesh.

Keep in step with (v. 25)—Paul was saying since the Holy Spirit gives us life, we should also allow Him to control how we live.

HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT HELP US FULFILL GOD'S PURPOSE FOR OUR LIVES?

In 1901, oil was discovered in Texas, right at the time America would begin craving oil. Prior to this, oil was used chiefly for kerosene lamps. The dawn of the 20th century brought with it the invention of the internal combustion engine. Cars, airplanes, and the neighbor's kid's noisy little motorbike soon followed. Suddenly, we had a great need for lots of oil.

A lot of Texans were just seeking out an existence until oil was discovered. Great wealth lay under people's land in Beaumont, but it wasn't doing them any good. It wasn't until a mining engineer named Anthony Lucas drilled a well that sent oil gushing up 1,000 feet in the air. With the oil, came prosperity for so many.

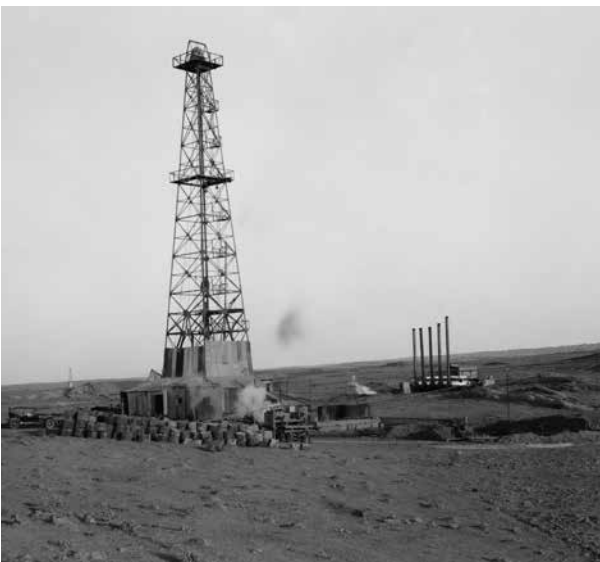
Most of us live our lives like it's 1900 in Beaumont, Texas. We're getting by without ever realizing the great potential that resides within us. If you are a follower of Christ, He has placed His Holy Spirit in you. The same God who brought this universe into existence and raised Jesus from the dead is living in You!

Aware of Warring Purposes Inside // Galatians 5:16-18

Once we come to Christ and we have a newfound purpose in Him, one might think all our problems disappear. Nope. We've been freed from the penalty and power of sin, but sin doesn't want to roll over and play dead. Sin is a habit of which too many of us are familiar, and we easily give in to the pull of the old sin nature. Paul referred to this as "the flesh," that nature we're all born with that once enslaved us to sin.

The antidote to the old sin nature does not reside in our ability. We don't simply try harder not to sin. We've been given the Holy Spirit. The moment you trust Christ for salvation, He comes to live in you through the presence of His Holy Spirit. God Himself comes to indwell you and empower you to holy living.

Many terms could be used to describe what it means to be a Christian, but my favorite is the one Paul used: a walk. The Christian life is a journey. As we walk through life, Christ walks with us. As we encounter challenges along the way, His Holy Spirit strengthens us to stand strong. It's a journey



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toward Christlikeness that will only end one day when we stand face-to-face before God Himself.

Paul emphasized this walk to the Christians in Galatia because others were telling them to follow the Jewish practices outlined in the Old Testament law. However, Christ set them free from rule-following. Instead of walking in accordance with a bunch of dos and don'ts, we're to "walk by the Spirit." The Spirit equips us and empowers us to live in full obedience to God.

WHAT DOES IT MEANS TO "WALK BY THE SPIRIT?"

Let me state this plainly and bluntly. The only way any of us can do what is right is when we walk by the Spirit. Relying on any aspect of ourselves—the flesh—won't cut it. In fact, the flesh will always pull us in the opposite direction. "The "flesh . . . and the Spirit" are at war within the believer. The desires of the flesh and the desires of the Spirit are not merely different; they "are opposed to each other." They are incompatible. The flesh will always lead us to sin, but the Spirit leads us to forsake sin and pursue the purity to which God has called us.

We see this in the phrase, "You don't do what you want." You may want to do what God desires, but your flesh entices you to fail, resulting in sin. This was clearly Paul's view in Romans 7:14-25, where he said his flesh caused him to fail at doing what he really wanted to do. Think about the last time you failed. Perhaps you lost your temper and yelled at someone. Was that really what you wanted to do? If you yelled at someone you cared about, you probably found yourself apologizing for your actions, or worse, living with an uncomfortable tension in that relationship. In our public and private lives, we find ourselves doing the very things we said we would never do again. We find ourselves struggling with the flesh.

The solution is simple, walk by the Spirit. How do we do that? When Paul wrote to the Colossian believers, he instructed them to "set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" (Col. 3:2). When our minds are occupied with the things of this world, we have difficulty keeping in step with the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, when we intentionally think about, dwell on, and meditate on the things of God's kingdom, we find the Spirit leading our lives more easily. Saturating our minds with Scripture has a way of pushing out the ways of this world!

Avoid Spiritual Patterns Outside //

Galatians 5:19-21

Paul illustrated the difference between walking by the flesh and walking by the Spirit by offering lists of those actions and attitudes



DIGGING DEEPER FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Have you ever wondered why Galatians states the "fruit" of the Spirit when nine attributes are mentioned? Our primary lessons in English teach us that when there is more than one, we need to add an "s" and make a word plural. Ironically, the Greek word for fruit is "karpos" which ends in an s, but it is singular. Some theologians note that the singular word "fruit" suggests that all nine aspects of the Holy Spirit belong together. Therefore, we don't get to randomly select the one we want or don't want to display. By staying connected to the vine, we should display all of them. John 15:5 says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me."

Is your life a reflection of walking in the Spirit or walking by the flesh?

that characterize each. He began with “the works of the flesh” and noted that these works “are obvious.” Unfortunately, the “obvious” nature of sin is not always recognized in our society. Our culture is seeking to normalize what the Bible identifies as sin, but for the Christ-follower, the one who has been indwelt by the Spirit and given a new purpose, these flesh-based characteristics should be obvious.

We can divide these characteristics and works of the flesh into four groups.

1. **Sexual sins.** These include “sexual immorality, moral impurity, [and] promiscuity.” Sexual immorality is a general term referring to any illicit sexual activity. Paul used the three terms together to sum up the whole realm of sexual sins from premarital sex to adultery to pornography to lustful thoughts.
2. **Spiritual infidelity.** When people commit “idolatry” and “sorcery,” they’re looking to other things as their gods. Idolatry involved the worship of “gods” made by human hands. That’s still a temptation in many places in the world today, but Paul also identified greed as idolatry (Col. 3:5). Idolatry occurs when we place anything before the lordship of Christ.
3. **Relational sins.** These are sins seen in our relationships: “hatreds, strife, jealousy, and outbursts of anger.” Each of these sins creates tension with others, erects barriers between people, and destroys relationships. Paul added “selfish ambitions.” Ambition isn’t necessarily a bad thing, but it becomes so when personal drive or desires are placed before the needs of others.
4. **Sins of decadence.** Paul warned against “drunkenness” and “carousing.” A lifestyle of indulgence, including drinking and boisterous behavior, is inconsistent with the life of a Christian.

Paul’s conclusion is sobering. “Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Yes, we still sin but Paul’s warning about those who won’t inherit the kingdom of God is about “those who practice such things.” These people have a regular practice of sinning. This is continuous behavior for them. Living in the flesh is a lifestyle.

Anyone who calls himself a Christian but lives a blatant, ongoing life of sin is someone showing no evidence of salvation. “So you’ll recognize them by their fruit” (Matt. 7:20).

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF TOLERATING WORKS OF THE FLESH IN OUR LIVES?



Appropriate Spiritual Produce

// Galatians 5:22-26

Paul followed his list of fleshly traits with a list of characteristics of the one who walks by the Spirit. Paul identified these traits as “fruit,” which is such an apt description in light of Jesus’s description of our relationship with Him as the vine and the branches. “I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me” (John 15:5).

The fruit Paul described in these verses is fruit that the Spirit produces as we cling to Him. Just as the branches get their sustenance from the vine, we look to Christ, walk by His Spirit, and the fruit listed here is the result. Greg Pouncey helps us to see how we live out the fruit listed in three groups.

Fruit tied to our hearts and minds.

- Love.
- Joy.
- Peace.

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Fruit tied to our relationships.

- Patience.
- Kindness.
- Goodness.

Fruit tied to our conduct.

- Faithfulness.
- Gentleness.
- Self-control.

It's only when we walk by the Spirit that we are able to live out our purpose and display these godly character traits. The solution for the war that rages within us is two-fold. First, we already "have crucified the flesh." Paul used graphic language to show that, when we came to Christ in faith and repentance, we did violence to our own sin natures and crucified the "passions and desires" of the flesh. Thus, we can't go back to the old way of living. Second, now that we are in Christ and indwelt by His Holy Spirit, we are to "live by the Spirit" and "keep in step with the Spirit."

WHICH ASPECTS OF THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT DO YOU NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT TO GROW IN YOU?

DID YOU KNOW?

The 1978 film, *The Wiz*, is "an adaptation of *The Wizard of Oz* that tries to capture the essence of the African-American experience" (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0078504/>). It is the story of 24-year-old kindergarten teacher Dorothy, who lives a sheltered life, is shy and unfulfilled. While spending Thanksgiving with her extended family, she doesn't seem to be thankful for much. When she gets caught in a snowstorm while chasing her dog Toto, they're transported to the mysterious Land of Oz. The movie chronicles her journey to find her way home. As Christians, are we sometimes wandering aimlessly through life looking for "home?" While Dorothy was told that she had the power in her shoes, we know that we have an unmatched power that dwells within us called the Holy Spirit. "He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive him because it doesn't see him or know him. But you do know him, because he remains with you and will be in you (John 14:17)."

Biblical Truth: The Holy Spirit will always point us to Christ.

What differences occur in your life when you've yielded to the power of the Holy Spirit?

LIVE IT

What can you do this week to ensure that you are walking in step with the Spirit?

Walking is a form of exercise that many of us use to enhance our physical well-being. When we walk, we improve our heart and lung function, strengthen our bones, and improve our balance. Think about the spiritual rewards we gain when we walk in the Spirit—an intimate relationship with Christ, defined purpose and order, and an overwhelming sense of peace and joy.

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- **Assess your walk.** Examine your life for areas where you follow the flesh. Confess those sins, turn from them, and ask God to fill you with His Holy Spirit.
- **Invest time.** Determine when and where you can meet God each day. Many people find using a journal to record insights and prayers is helpful as they set aside time for God.
- **Redirect your thoughts.** Begin the habit of relying on the Spirit, so that your thoughts are honoring to Christ. Memorize Philippians 4:8.

DAILY READINGS

1. WHO ARE YOU? // 1 PETER 2:9

Do you know who you are? Living out our purpose requires a confident understanding of our identity in Christ. First Peter 2:9 lets the believer know that we are a “chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation, and a people for his possession.” In short, the believer is set apart for God’s purpose. Having been chosen by a King, every believer is immediately classified as royal which also makes us holy because God is holy (1 Pet. 1:15-17). We are His possessions because we are new creatures in Christ, no longer belonging to ourselves (2 Cor. 5:17), having been made one (Rom. 6:5-7) with Christ. Developing confidence in our new identity is part of living out our purpose.

Purpose must be known before purpose can be lived out.

2. CREATED TO LOVE // COLOSSIANS 1:15-16; 1 CORINTHIANS 13

All of creation was created by God, for God through Christ. He created all of creation with free will. Mankind, specifically, can choose to do as God pleases or not. Christians are not robots. Accepting Christ as one’s Lord and Savior is a choice, yet it does not disable one from choosing to sin. God requires a constant and continuous “yes” from the believer to live out His purpose through us. He will never force His children to do anything. Love is not controlling or forceful. It is instead, patient and kind, ever hoping for the best for its beloved (1 Cor. 13:1-5). God draws us to Himself and our purpose is to do the same; to draw others to Him through love and kindness.

As we receive the love of God, we are called to extend that love to others.

3. KNOWN BY GOD // JEREMIAH 1:5

Before we were born, God knew us. He was not just aware of us, He formed us, and knows every detail of everything there is to know about us. We have been shaped into His image and likeness

(Gen. 1:26). He knows the number of follicles and hair strands that crown our heads. God knows us intimately and has infused a unique calling and purpose into the heart of every person to live and abide by. Our life experiences have shaped us and formed us into who we ought to be. God takes all that we have been through, the joy, the challenges, and yes, the downright misery, and shapes it into ministry.

We have been created and shaped for purpose.

4. COMMISSIONED WITH PURPOSE // MATT. 28:19

Matthew 28:19 is otherwise known as “The Great Commission.” It is a delineation of God’s purpose for the Church. The Church has been called to “go” and not “sit.” Being a believer requires active involvement in the dissemination of the Gospel and not simply the absorption of it. The church building is simply a meeting place where believers congregate corporately to worship God together. God has not called us to a building, however. He has called us to the nations to reach the lost. Our purpose is not simply to go to church but to be the Church seeking out the lost compelling them to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior.

The Church’s purpose is not only in doing but most of all in being.

5. WALKING IN FAITH // JOHN 10:27

As we take steps, God orders our steps (Ps. 119:133). We must be willing to take steps based on what we know of God and have heard from God. Taking steps based on what has been heard from God requires faith. A purpose-driven life requires faith that what God has said will actually happen if we continue to obey. But like Peter, if we take our eyes off of Jesus, though He bids us to come, we will begin to sink. Fulfilling our purpose must become a lifestyle so vitally connected to God that no experience opposed to Him is able to tempt us down a different path.

Purpose is lived out through steadfast faith.