

# 60: WALKING BY THE SPIRIT

By John Leavy  
In Week 12: Discipleship Under Pressure

3 Min read



***“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.” — Galatians 5:16***

When most men hear the phrase “walking by the Spirit,” they often think about avoiding sin. While that is certainly part of it, there is something deeper that is often left unsaid.

Many men approach the Christian life the same way they approach a difficult trail. They plan, tighten their boots, lower their heads, and push forward through sheer determination. They rely on discipline, effort, and willpower. Those things have value, but they were never meant to be the primary source of spiritual growth.

Galatians 5:16 says, “Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.” Notice the order. Paul does not say to defeat the flesh and then walk by the Spirit. He says walk by the Spirit, and the result will be victory over the flesh.

The Christian life is not powered by self-improvement. It is powered by dependence.

Many men spend years trying to overcome temptation by trying harder. They focus all their attention on what they are attempting to avoid. Meanwhile, they neglect the relationship that provides the strength to overcome.

A man hiking a difficult trail rarely succeeds by staring at every obstacle. He succeeds by keeping his eyes on the path ahead. Walking by the Spirit works much the same way. The focus is not merely resisting sin. The focus is following God.

## **APPLICATION**

One of the greatest misconceptions in the Christian life is that maturity comes from self-discipline alone. Discipline matters, but discipline without dependence eventually reaches its limit.

Walking by the Spirit is not passive. It is an active decision to submit daily to God's direction. It means seeking Him through His Word, responding to His conviction, obeying what He reveals, and trusting Him when the trail becomes difficult.

The flesh constantly pushes us toward self-reliance. It tells us we can handle things ourselves. It encourages us to trust our instincts, our emotions, and our own understanding. The Spirit leads in a different direction. He calls us to trust God even when the path is unclear.

This becomes most evident under pressure. Anyone can appear spiritually strong when life is smooth. The real test comes when the trail turns uphill. Fatigue, disappointment, conflict, and temptation reveal what we rely on.

Men who walk by the Spirit are not men who never struggle. They are men who continually return to the right source of strength.

The difference may not be obvious at first. Both men attend church. Both read Scripture. Both want to grow. But one depends primarily on effort while the other depends on God. Over time, the difference becomes clear.

One grows weary trying to carry the weight alone. The other learns to walk in step with the One who was meant to carry it.

## **LIVE IT OUT**

This week, pay attention to where you are relying on willpower instead of dependence. Before making decisions, facing challenges, or responding to temptation, pause and ask for God's direction. Walking by the Spirit is not a one-time choice. It is a daily, minute-by-minute decision to follow His lead.

***PRAY THIS...***

***“Lord, that I would walk by the Spirit as I traverse life’s trails.”***

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Practice builds the man.***

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