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3. Faith – The Key to Walking in the Spirit

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Free media and discipleship resources for pastors, leaders, and growing disciples.

3. Faith – The Key to Walking in the Spirit

It is by faith that God's power to live for Christ and walk in the Holy Spirit is available to you!

Use NOTES in this app or keep a separate journal to answer questions found in this lesson and study notes for your reference.

Q. What does Hebrews 11:6 say about faith?

Many people think that living for Christ means helping the poor, feeding the hungry, and living morally. However, as C. S. Lewis points out, "Mere morality is not the end of life. You were made for something quite different from that ... The idea of reaching 'a good life' without Christ is based on a double error. Firstly, we cannot do it; and secondly ... we have missed the very point of our existence."

Lewis explains that the point of our existence centers on the tremendous inheritance we have in Christ as His children. Living for Christ is not our duty as His slaves, but our privilege as His sons and daughters. In other words, God accepts us perfectly regardless of our performance.

God tells us that living for Christ is not accomplished by doing what Jesus did, but rather by letting Him live His life through us by faith. Helping the poor, feeding the hungry, and living morally should be done from a heart of gratitude rather than out of compulsion. We are to live by faith—not works.

As we live by faith, Jesus' love will shine through us. Faith in Christ, over time, will result in obedience to God's Word, even though there will be ups and downs (James 2:17).

Your faith will continually be tested. The Bible says the Christian life is like a battlefield with three specific enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil (Satan).

Paul tells the Ephesian believers that the only way to defeat these enemies is to trust God and depend upon His Word, the Bible.

Q. Read Ephesians 6:10-18. What are the keys to winning the battle over these enemies?

Emotionally Charged ... But No Power

Jesus was giving his disciples final instructions before He went back to His Father. They were all emotionally charged after His resurrection ... and ready to give up everything to follow Him.

But Jesus knew they were not ready. Even after three years of His training and teaching them, they didn't have the strength to live the life He had called them to live. They would fail miserably if they tried to live for Christ in their own strength!

Jesus knew they needed His power. He told them, "But you are to be given power when the Holy Spirit has come to you" (Acts 1:8).

Feelings Are Fickle

Many believers have mistaken the Holy Spirit's power for an emotional feeling or euphoria. Sadly, when the emotions and feelings depart ... they think they have lost the Holy Spirit's power. They don't believe in God's promise: "I will never leave or forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

Q. Why are feelings not enough?

The power the Holy Spirit brings to you is much more than emotions or feelings ... although they may be part of it. Trying to live for Christ without the Holy Spirit is like driving a Ferrari without gasoline—powerless. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit gives us:

- Power to abide in Christ and love others.
- Power to overcome trials.
- Power to overcome temptation.
- Power to overcome sin.
- Power to produce fruit.
- Power to obey Christ.

Jesus does not give you a list of rules to follow. Rather, He empowers you by His Holy Spirit to live a life of obedience.

Belief Causes Behavior

How we act and behave is motivated by what we think. If we think we have a better plan for our lives than God does, we will chase after self-centered pursuits.

Many people fill their lives by chasing after money, sex, or toys, thinking it will bring them happiness. They think, “He who dies with the most toys, wins!” As a result, they waste their lives.

Other people leave God out of their lives because they believe life will be boring. They believe God is against fun ... and doesn’t care about their dreams. They don’t want to trust Him with their future.

The Bible says that God loves you so much that He desires and plans the very best for your future. The psalmist tells us: “Take delight in the Lord, and He will give you your heart’s desires” (Psalm 37:4).

If you accept God’s Word as truth and follow Him, He will give you desires that are in alignment with His will.

Q. What does Romans 8:32 say about God’s trustworthiness?

Q. Are you ready to make the truth of God’s Word the foundation of your beliefs?

Overcoming Doubt

Joni’s Story

Joni Eareckson was an attractive, athletic teenager who had everything going her way in life—until she dove head first into a shallow lake ... breaking her neck.

Joni had trusted Christ for salvation in her youth group, but most of her hopes and dreams were for self-fulfillment. Suddenly Joni’s world totally fell apart. She would never walk, or be able to use her hands again!

Joni’s faith was shaken. Joni says:

“In those first few months after my injury, the promises of God seemed anything but true ... How could I be expected to believe when everything inside and outside of me screamed just the opposite?”

Joni struggled greatly until a friend from Young Life named Steve Estes encouraged her to trust God. Through time, and hearing God's Word, Joni began to believe God's promises. Joni did overcome her despair by faith—and today runs an international ministry, Joni and Friends, which shares Christ's love with disabled people all over the world.

"Today as I look back, I am convinced that the whole ordeal of my paralysis was inspired by God's love. I wasn't the brunt of some cruel divine joke. God had reasons behind my suffering, and learning some of them has made all the difference in the world." (Joni, A Step Further)

Victorious Faith

The Bible tells us that it is possible to live a life of victorious faith. Hebrews chapter 11 gives us examples of men and women who trusted God in spite of great adversity and opposition. Such a life pleases God greatly and results in a life of victory over our circumstances.

Q. Read Hebrews chapter 11. Write down your thoughts about those who had victorious faith.

When God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt He performed many miracles, including drying up the Red Sea so they could escape the armies of Pharaoh. They saw God's mighty hand at work, but soon forgot and began to doubt His promise to provide for their basic needs.

God told them through Moses that He had a place of rest for them to dwell in, called the Promised Land, "a land flowing with milk and honey." But all they did was complain and doubt God's promise. (Read Exodus chapters 3 through 20.)

They sent 12 spies to scout out the land and discovered it to be a paradise "flowing with milk and honey." But there were also giants there. When they came back and reported their findings, only Joshua and Caleb were willing to trust God and face the giants. The other 10 scouts were afraid and convinced the doubting Israelites they would be unable to overcome the giants. For the next 40 years, they wandered in the wilderness—unwilling to trust God and enter His place of rest. (Read chapters 13 and 14 in the book of Numbers.)

Q. What are the giants in your life?

Q. God has a place of rest for you. Read Hebrews 3:7-4:16. According to this passage, how do we enter God’s rest?

Q. What are we warned against?

If you will simply trust the promises in God’s Word, you will discover wonderful rest. That is victorious faith!

Is there something in your life keeping you from trusting God? If any of the following areas are keeping you from trusting God—confess them to God, and repent (change your thinking), now—before it is too late.

	HELPING	HURTING
FRIENDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RECREATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HABITS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIME IN GOD’S WORD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
THOUGHTS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

God can be trusted in all areas of your life.

Q. Spend some time evaluating the list above, and write down any area in which you need to take prayerful action to change.

“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect His will really is.”
(Romans 12:2)

Walking in the Spirit is a moment-by-moment decision

Broken Fellowship

Every believer sins and breaks fellowship with the Holy Spirit at times (1 John 1:8). Broken fellowship does not mean your sins aren’t forgiven. Jesus paid for all your sins on the cross, once and for all.

Broken fellowship means that you are not abiding in Christ, and therefore are not experiencing God's purpose and plan for your life.

Purposeful Living ... Your Choice

Every moment of your life, the Holy Spirit is waiting to guide you into purposeful living. But He always allows you free choice.

The apostle Paul (formerly named Saul) had been a strong opponent of the early Christians. As a high-ranking Jewish leader, he was angry at everything Christians stood for ... and wanted to abolish Christianity and the worship of Christ, even having Christians put to death.

“On his way to Damascus, Jesus miraculously appeared to him in a vision. When Paul heard and saw Jesus ... recognizing Him as Lord ... he asked Jesus, ‘What will You have me to do?’” (Acts 9:6).

Paul's attitude of willingness to serve Christ is what God wants from you and me.

“God's way” in life results in purpose, power, peace, and hope. God wants to direct your life all the time.

But the sinful part of you will always want your own way ... the “self-centered way.” A self-centered life may get high on short-term pleasures, but usually ends up in fear, emptiness, loneliness, and finally despair.

However, at any moment of your day, you can get back on “God's Way” and restore fellowship with Him. Simply take the following steps:



“Spiritual Breathing”

To better understand how to walk in the Spirit on a moment-by-moment basis, Bill Bright compares it to breathing. When you breathe, you exhale impurities and inhale pure air and oxygen. In “spiritual breathing,” you “exhale” sin-by confession, and “inhale” the Holy Spirit’s control-by faith. (Read *Spirit-filled Life* by Bill Bright.)

Once the Holy Spirit is in control of your life, He gives you the power to live for God.



Power to Overcome Trials

“Whenever trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy. For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything” (James 1:2-4).

Lars’ Story

As an unknown golfer, Lars Hansen had stunned the Canadian golf community by winning the Ontario Bantam Golf Championship at the young age of 13. With his flashy smile, charming good looks, and winsome personality, it seemed like Lars had what it took to bring happiness.

But an inner void and lack of purpose led him to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and Lord. Soon Lars began reading the Bible, and sharing Christ with his friends. After playing collegiate golf in California and graduating

in mathematics, Lars began working for a major corporation.

At age 28, Lars began feeling weak, and was diagnosed with severe kidney failure. He eventually lost his kidneys, his eyesight, and finally his life, at age 35.

During the seven years that Lars' athletic body, sight, and mobility deteriorated, his faith in Christ actually deepened. He listened to Christian radio broadcasts, and never asked, "Why?" Even in his deepest pain, he believed that God loved him, and had some unknown purpose for his trial. On his last night, Lars weakly prayed to his heavenly Father, trusting Him with his future.

Q. Read Romans 8:28. What is God telling you in this verse that you can trust Him for?

Just because you are living in to obedience of God's Word, does not mean your life will be trouble-free. The real test is whether you are trusting God in spite of your circumstances.

Power over Temptation

We all face numerous temptations daily. Being tempted is not a sin; it is normal.

When tempted, your choice is either to give in or to trust God. Giving in to temptation is sin, and breaks fellowship with God.

Read the following verse carefully, and apply what it says to any temptations you are currently facing.

"The temptations that come into your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it. When you are tempted, He will show you a way out so that you will not give in to it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

In this verse, God tells you how to overcome temptation:

- Trust God ... that your temptation is normal.
- Trust God ... for the ability to withstand it.
- Trust God ... to give you a "way out."

Q. In what ways are you trusting God to help you overcome temptation?

Don't ever say, "The temptation is too strong," and give in to it. If you are abiding in God, the Holy Spirit has promised to give you the power to withstand temptation.

Darrel's Story

"I was involved in a sexual relationship with Tori whom I had been dating for two years. When I got back from Young Life Camp, I wanted to please my Savior. But I tried to rationalize my behavior- thinking that God might approve. I thought God would understand my needs.

But, because I wanted to please Christ, I read the Bible to see what it said about sexual purity. I realized the importance of obedience to Christ, and that sex outside of marriage was wrong. I knew though, that I didn't have the strength to break off the relationship with Tori.

So, by faith, I asked for the Holy Spirit to empower me to obey Him. The temptation to have sex with Tori was so strong, that I realized we needed to quit seeing each other.

When I chose to obey Him and quit having sex with Tori, the Holy Spirit gave me a tremendous peace and joy. Since that decision, life has been truly awesome!"

Darrel took God seriously, and "ran" from the temptation that could have entrapped him and hindered his walk with Christ. By faith Darrel chose to obey God ... and he won a great victory! (See John 14:21.)

Q. What are some steps you can take the next time you are tempted?

Power over Sin

Sin can become addictive, but if you yield to the Holy Spirit, He will give you His power to overcome that bondage.

Matt's Story

"Although I was a worship leader in my church, I led a double life. I became addicted to pornography at eleven years of age. As my addiction grew, my cravings became more vile and ugly. Soon I was having all-night sessions on the Internet, and even fantasizing about rape. I was out of control.

When a godly man told me about the Holy Spirit's power to break my addiction, I began looking into God's Word and memorized its promises. I discovered God's awesome power to overcome my addiction.

My breakthrough came when I began believing and claiming God's promises. Whenever I am tempted, I think about a promise in God's Word that applies to that particular temptation.

I then simply focus on His Word, and pray for the Holy Spirit to give me strength to overcome.

There are really four keys to my victory over the bondage of sin:

First, I needed to take the time to memorize and meditate on God's promises. I discovered a treasure of God's many promises throughout Scripture that are vital to victorious living.

Second, I confess my sins whenever my thoughts are wrong. According to 1 John 1:9, I take Him at his Word that I am forgiven. (Exhale ... See "Spiritual Breathing.")

Third, I surrender my thoughts and actions to the Holy Spirit by telling Him I want to please Him. (Inhale ... See "Spiritual Breathing.")

Finally, I spend time with my mentor and other Christians who hold me accountable and encourage me in my walk with Christ.

As I've applied God's Word to all areas of my life, I have been free from bondage to sin and addiction. God has blessed me with a wonderful Christian wife and family. My wife and I are now teaching others how memorizing God's promises can help overcome sin and addiction. I feel so free and joyful now that I have turned my life completely over to the Holy Spirit's control."

In the New Testament, we read, "In every battle you will need faith as your shield to stop the fiery arrows aimed at you by Satan" (Ephesians 6:16).

If you are involved in a battle over temptation, sin, or addiction to a substance or lifestyle, the power of the Holy Spirit is able to lift you out and give you total victory. Choose to trust Him!

Power to Bear Fruit

The Holy Spirit will empower you to bear fruit when you are trusting Him, and abiding in Christ. Abiding in Christ means walking in the Spirit.

In John, Jesus told his disciples: “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

Fruit of the Spirit

Jesus compared your life to a branch that is totally dependent on the grapevine. The purpose of the vine is to produce big juicy grapes. The more fruit ... the more the farmer is pleased.

The Holy Spirit wants to produce the fruit of the Spirit in your life, which is identified as:



The Fruit of the Spirit results in a heart that God uses to reach others for Christ. (Read John chapter 15.)

Your Daily Power

When you get up in the morning, do you call on God’s power to help you through the day’s challenges?

Q. Who are you depending on in each area below:

DAILY ISSUES	MY POWER	GOD'S POWER
RELATIONSHIPS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HEALTH/FEARS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TRIALS/TEMPTATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
EMOTIONS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCHOOL/WORK	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GOALS/DREAMS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

You can ask the Holy Spirit to give you His power for all the details of your life. God gives you this great promise that you can make yours every single day:

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear ... but of power, love, and self-discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7).

Q. In this verse, what does God tell you is not from Him, and what does He promise to give you?

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Q. What are you trusting God for right now?