

## *Walking by the spirit in The Body of Christ*

There is a question that is asked from time to time; “How does one obtain a knowledge of the scriptures?”. The question stated in this manner does not express what is really being asked, so I will restate it.

“How does one who is not a scholar, or an intellectual, effectively obtain a functional, accurate knowledge of the scriptures?”. I might add that the person seeking may have limited reading skills and a limited use of the English language.

So often the one asking the question is directed towards corporate religious organizations who teach religion and religious dogma which is steeped in western culture and intellectualism. I will not be discussing religion in this section of the teaching, but how to obtain a knowledge of the scriptures, the Bible, The Truth.

All of us started out knowing absolutely nothing about the Bible, God, Jesus Christ, or the concepts of prayer and worship. Someone had to teach us about these things. I was blessed to be taught the Bible by my parents, starting at a very early age.

I looked up the word “study” in an on-line dictionary, and found a couple of definitions: “To acquire knowledge on a subject through concentration on prepared learning materials.” “To acquire knowledge about a given subject, often by memorization or reading.”

I must say that as a young child I acquired some knowledge of the scriptures without any study, reading, or memorization. My parents taught me by informally telling stories, during the day or before bed time.

In the years since, most of my time with the Bible could not be classified as “studying”, but reading, as one would read for enjoyment. In addition, I have made very little effort at memorization.

There is basically only one prerequisite for acquiring a knowledge of the scriptures and that is a hunger to know The Truth; not religion, but The Truth. Religion and The Truth of the scriptures will NEVER agree. The hunger to know The Truth is a desire that is intense enough to be compared to physical hunger. This is a desire that is enough to motivate a person to act. This is a desire, not for a truth, some truth, or religion, but a desire to know The Truth. You will be filled only to the extent of your hunger. If you are little bit hungry, you will be fed a little bit. If you have a ravenous hunger, you will be fed as much as you desire.

The first step in acquiring a knowledge of the scriptures is to make the time to become familiar with the numerous stories that are recorded in the Bible.

One book my parents used to teach me the stories in the Bible was “Hurlburt's Story of the Bible”. The instructions for finding this book on the Internet are recorded in my teaching notes which are available on my website.

The author of this book arranged the stories in their chronological order. Each story is expressed in simple, clear language. Each one is a complete story and can stand on its own. Yet, together these stories construct the narrative of the Bible, thus expressing “the story of the Bible”. The target audience of the book are those who do not have a Biblical background and have a limited English vocabulary. Artwork is included in the book to make it even more appealing. The artwork is not accurate so it can be ignored.

## *Walking by the spirit in The Body of Christ*

Scriptural references are noted with each story, so it is easy to read each story from the Bible whenever you are ready.

Then find a version of the Bible that is easy and enjoyable for you to read. When I just want to read, I use the Revised English Bible. When I want to read in preparation for studying or for teaching, I use the English Standard Version.

Once you have become familiar with the stories of the Bible, you can begin using your reading Bible. Read as if you are reading a novel. Just read for enjoyment. If you come across a section that you don't enjoy reading, such as a family tree or genealogy, skip that section. Don't read to retain and understand every little detail. Read to capture the narrative, the story. Memorization of individual scriptures is not needed. It is much easier to remember a story than the individual scriptures that make up the story. Even young children can remember stories.

Once you have experienced the narrative of the Bible, you can begin to perceive the different contexts that make up that narrative. Now you can begin to read the contexts and see how they fit together. All the while you are reading for enjoyment.

“How much time will this take?” you might ask. It depends upon how hungry and persistent you are. Everyone grows at their own pace.

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To find Hurlburt's Story of the Bible, go to “<http://books.google.com>”. Search for “Hurlburt's”. The following is a link to the book. Copy this link and paste it into your Internet browser  
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### Walking by the spirit in the Body of Christ

Turn to Ephesians 2

Now let's change the subject and talk about “walking by the spirit”, being “led by the spirit”, or walking in newness of life, walking by the newly created spiritual self.

Ephesians 2:8

**8** For by grace you have been saved through faith (*the faith of Jesus Christ*). And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

**9** not a result of works (*our own efforts to be good enough*), so that no one may boast.

Salvation through the faith of Jesus Christ does not come to us through our own efforts. When someone says that you must have faith, implying that you must make some kind of effort to obtain your faith or increase your faith, they are speaking inaccurate statements. The faith referred to here is the faith of Jesus Christ which is given to each one of us; thus we have salvation. Our salvation is based upon the accomplishments of Jesus Christ, not our own accomplishments.

## *Walking by the spirit in The Body of Christ*

Ephesians 2:10

**10** For we (*each one of us, right now*) are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Salvation, the new birth, results in the creation of a new nature in each one of us, a spiritual nature. It is sometimes referred to as the “gift of holy spirit”. It is created IN Christ Jesus, which means this new nature is in complete fellowship with Christ Jesus.

God went to work in us, so that we could work, we could function. It is that new creation that is able to do the good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in these good works. These works were prepared for us before the ages began. The flesh can not accomplish these good works – God created a new masterpiece in each one of us so that we could do the good works. This is NOT religion!

Ephesians 4:22

**22** to put off your old self (*the old man, the flesh, your old identity*), which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt (*dead and decayed*) through deceitful desires,

**23** and to be renewed (*brand new, nothing old remaining*) in the spirit of your minds,

**24** and to put on the new self (*the new man, the spiritual self, your new identity*), created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

This is you, this is your new identity. This is who God sees when He looks at you. You are created after God's likeness in TRUE righteousness and TRUE holiness. Yes there is false, counterfeit, righteousness and false, counterfeit, holiness.

1 Corinthians 2:16 says that “...we have the mind of Christ”.

Colossians 3:9

**9** Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self (*the old man, the flesh, your former identity*) with its practices

**10** and have put on the new self (*the new man, the spiritual self, your new identity, the real you*), which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. (*This is spiritual knowledge, not worldly knowledge*)

**11** Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

Turn to Romans 6

What happened to the “old self” of the flesh?

Romans 6:6

**6** We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

Galatians 2:29

**19** For through the law I (*the old self*) died to the law, so that I (*the new spiritual self*) might live to God.

**20** I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I (*the old self*) who live, but **Christ who lives in me (the new spiritual self)**. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

## *Walking by the spirit in The Body of Christ*

We are united with Christ, each one of us is identified with Christ. This is who we really truly are. When God sees us he sees that new spiritual self created in Christ Jesus in true righteousness and true holiness, completely united and identified with Christ.

Galatians 5:24

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

**25** If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

The life we now live, this new life, this new identity, we live by the faith of Jesus Christ. So, we walk by the spirit, we walk, move, behave, think, conduct ourselves according to and by the abilities of this new spiritual self.

Let's examine the direct testimony of Jesus Christ himself. Turn to Acts 9

Acts 9:1

**1** But Saul, still breathing **threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord**, went to the high priest

**2** and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

**3** Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.

**4** And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, **why are you persecuting me?**"

**5** And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "**I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.**"

We belong to Christ Jesus. He claims us and our new identity with him! Jesus was not speaking figuratively or rhetorically. The believers are indeed united with Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:16

**16** From now on, therefore, we regard (*know*) no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded (*knew*) Christ according to the flesh, we regard (*know*) him thus no longer.

**17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old (*self of the flesh, the old identity*) has passed away; behold, the new (*spiritual self, the new identity*) has come.

Some Bible resources available today indicate that the Christian life is a struggle, a war between the flesh and the spirit. However we see that we have been rescued from the old nature, the old self of the flesh, the old identity. We have a new nature, a new spiritual self, a new identity which God and Christ recognize. We live our lives united with Christ.

Our struggle, our war is a spiritual one, not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers of the darkness of this world! The flesh and blood has already been defeated, crucified with Christ.

Turn to John 10

God gave his only son so that he could go to work in us and create us in Christ Jesus. God worked mightily so that we could have the abilities to accomplish the good works that He appointed for us before the ages began. He has given each of us the ability to walk in newness of life, to walk by the spirit.

## *Walking by the spirit in The Body of Christ*

In John 10, Jesus is addressing the spiritually blind Pharisees. They were spiritually blind, and infected with error to the point that they could not know that they were blind.

John 10:1

**1** “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber (*he is not the shepherd, he is attempting to steal the sheep*).

**2** But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

**3** To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. (*This is the genuine shepherd. The sheep know his voice and he knows all the sheep by name. Who does the leading? The genuine shepherd*)

**4** When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

**5** A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” (*they do not know the voice of the counterfeits*)

**6** This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they (*the Pharisees*) did not understand what he was saying to them.

**7** So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

**8** All who came before me **are thieves and robbers**, (*these are the Pharisees and religious leaders*) but the sheep did not listen to them. (*why? Because they do not know the voice of strangers*)

**9** I am the door. If anyone enters (*the sheepfold*) by me, he will be saved and will go in and out (*of the sheepfold, led by the genuine shepherd*) and find pasture (*nourishment, life*).

**10** The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy (*who? The believers*). I came that they (*who? The believers*) may have life and have it abundantly.

John 10:14

**14** I am the good shepherd. **I know** my own and **my own know me**,

**15** just as (*in the same manner as*) the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. (*how does Jesus Christ know the father? By the operation of holy spirit within Jesus. In the same manner, that is how we know Jesus Christ*)

**16** And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and **they will listen** to my voice (*they will hear it and heed it*). So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

Do you think that Jesus knew what he was talking about? He prophesied that the believers of his day and time would know him by the operation of holy spirit. It is no less true today, in fact the power of God that is at work in us and is available today is much greater.

God is confident that you have the ability to walk by the spirit, and that you can know and recognize Him and His voice.

Christ Jesus is confident that you have the ability to walk by the spirit, and that you can know and recognize him and his voice.

Recognize who you really are, your new identity, your new spiritual self which is God's workmanship, he created you and your fellow believers in true righteousness and true holiness.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 12

## *Walking by the spirit in The Body of Christ*

Now that we all know about our ability to walk by the newly created spiritual self, the real you, we are ready to examine the Body of Christ. 1 Cor 12 opens a context regarding spiritual matters.

1 Corinthians 12:4

**4** Now there are varieties of (spiritual) gifts, but the same Spirit (*the new spiritual self*);

**5** and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;

**6** and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers **them all** in everyone (*all the believers*).

**7** To each (*each and every one of the believers*) is given the manifestation of the Spirit (*the new spiritual self*) for the common good.

Do you see the word “gift” anywhere in verse 7? No, its not used there. We have just learned that every believer is a newly created spiritual being. Each one of us has the gift of holy spirit. Verse 7 is introducing us to the manner in which this new spiritual self is manifested, shown forth in the physical or senses realm. The only gift that can be pointed to here is the gift of holy spirit, which has already been given to each and every believer. Remember the immediate context is the manifestation of holy spirit. Why is this manifestation given? Is it a marketing tool so that I can promote myself in a commercial venture? Is it a tool I can use to protect myself from anything evil ever happening to me again? Is it about “me” at all? The answer to all these questions is “NO”. The manifestation of holy spirit is given to each and every one of us for the common good.

Remember Ephesians 2:10 which taught us that we are God's workmanship, created in unity with Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared before the ages began so that we would walk, do, faithfully practice them. God has equipped us for these good works. One of the tools we each have is the manifestation of the new spiritual self, the gift of holy spirit.

[NOTE: Although I used the ESV rendering of “the common good” or “benefit for the common good”, it was brought to my attention (by John Brown) that this is a particularly weak translation. In fact it is unique to the ESV. The term here really means “advantage” or “profitable” in this instance. A preferable wording would be “profitable for all”. Furthermore, John went on to say that “Explaining this word as 'producing a symphony in the body of Christ' would bring out the real sense of its use in this context”]

1 Corinthians 12:8

**8** For to one (*One what? This refers to one benefit for the common good*) is given through the Spirit ~~the utterance~~ (*a word*) of wisdom, and to another (*benefit for the common good*) ~~the utterance~~ (*a word*) of knowledge according to the same Spirit,

**9** to another (*benefit for the common good*) ~~faith~~ (*believing*) by the same Spirit, to another (*benefit for the common good*) gifts of healing by the one Spirit,

**10** to another (*benefit for the common good*) the working of miracles, to another (*benefit for the common good*) prophecy, to another (*benefit for the common good*) the ability to distinguish between spirits (*or spiritual discernment*), to another (*benefit for the common good*) various kinds of tongues, to another (*benefit for the common good*) the interpretation of tongues.

**11** All these (*benefits for the common good*) are empowered (*or energized*) by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he (*referring to each one individually*) wills.

## *Walking by the spirit in The Body of Christ*

So what is your will? What benefit for the common good do you, the individual, will to have energized? How do you desire to serve with these nine benefits?

1 Corinthians 12:12

**12** For just as the body is one (*it is completely united*) and has many (*individual*) members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

In a physical body, the members of that body (hands, feet, arms, legs, etc.) are all united with the body which makes up one person. All these members are identified with the person. This is MY hand, MY foot. My hand is as much a part of ME as my foot or any other part of MY body.

1 Corinthians 12:13

**13** For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free (*male or female*)—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. (*See, there is no water here. It is a spiritual baptism.*)

**14** For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

Remember, Ephesians 4 teaches that there is one body, one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one (*spiritual*) baptism, one God. However, within the one body there is a great variety, a great diversity, of many members.

1 Corinthians 12:15

**15** If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body.

**16** And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body.

The attitude or the view of the individual member, regardless of its function or place within the body, does not affect its union with the body. Whether we agree or not, we are a member of the body of Christ. WE are united with HIM. Because each one of us are united with him, WE are UNITED with EACH OTHER. Our opinion on this issue has no impact. Whether we like it or not, whether we pray about it or not we are UNITED with Christ and Each Other.

1 Corinthians 12:17

**17** If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?

As the physical members of a body have different functions and impacts in that body, the functioning of each individual in the body of Christ has a beneficial, needed, impact. How do we function, how do we bring a beneficial impact for the common good within the body of Christ? The service we render as individuals is accomplished, in part, by way of the manifestation of holy spirit, by God energizing those 9 wonderful benefits for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12:18

**18** But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.

So, who does the energizing of the benefits for the common good? God! Who empowers all the spiritual activities in all of us? God! Who arranged us, the members in the body of Christ? God! Do you see any mention of a corporate denomination or corporate religious organization here? Do these verses mention anything about qualifications or permission from any other person before you begin to

## *Walking by the spirit in The Body of Christ*

serve? No, there is not a word about this.

1 Corinthians 12:19

**19** If all were a single member, where would the body be?

**20** As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

We are not all the same member with the same function. The eye had better not be doing what the ear is supposed to do. The foot had better not be attempting to serve as a fingernail. The content of our service, the impact of our service, how and where and the manner in which we serve is NOT UNIFORM. Uniformity of service is a great marketing tool. It is a concept and a practice which belongs in commerce, in the business organizations. It is a practice which DOES NOT belong in the body of Christ, or any other physical body.

Do you know what happens to a brain when the various functions of the brain start doing exactly the same thing at the same time? If enough of the brain gets synchronized like that, all working together, doing the same thing at the same time, the result is an epileptic seizure! If the seizure goes on long enough, the brain is then unable to manage the other parts of the body.

By way of the operation of holy spirit, each one of us has service, good works, to perform within the body of Christ. Our service is to be rendered by holy spirit, to bring about benefits for the common good of the body. We are to function within the body of Christ where God placed us. We are to function as the head of the body, Christ Jesus, directs us.

1 Corinthians 12:27

**27** Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Do you understand now, why we are identified, inseparably, with Christ? Do you understand now why the rulers of the darkness of this world do not want you to understand your identity? Their only hope to stop the body of Christ and to stop the Word of God in our day and time is to stop each one of us from serving by the operation of holy spirit. They have got to stop you and me from walking by the spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:28

**28** And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.

Turn to Ephesians 4

Who did the appointing? Some man or woman, some organization? No, God did the appointing. Don't be surprised if people and the corporate organizations don't recognize your appointment. Don't be surprised if people and the organizations of the world object when you serve.

Ephesians 4:11

**11** And he (Christ) gave (*God did the appointing, Christ imparted the appointments*) the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, (*why?*)

**12** to equip the saints for the work of ministry (*what is this ministry, this service to accomplish?*), for building up the body of Christ,

These are the good works that God prepared for us before the ages began. These are the good works which we are to accomplish by way of walking by the spirit, the newly created spiritual self, the real you and the real me. The specific details of the service that each individual is to render becomes clear as each individual begins to serve as the Lord directs.

*Walking by the spirit in The Body of Christ*

To strengthen you further, I invite you to check the contexts of all the verses that have been covered in this teaching.