

Walking by the spirit in the Body of Christ, Part 2

Turn to Ephesians 2

Lets review a few verses we covered in part 1 of this series “Walking by the spirit in the Body of Christ”

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 (*you did not save yourself*); 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.

10 For we (*each one of us, right now*) are **his** workmanship (*not our own*), created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Confessing Jesus as lord of your life and believing that God raised him from the dead is how a person becomes born again. 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”. The new spiritual self 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. We have work to do! It is the new spiritual creation, the new spiritual self, that is able to do the good works which God prepared for us before the ages began. These are NOT religious works!

Ephesians 4:22

22 to put off your old self (*the old self of 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 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.

Turn to Colossians 3

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 (*of the flesh, your former identity*) with its practices

10 and have put on the new self (*the new 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 Galatians 2

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.

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Galatians 2:19

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.

Galatians 5:24

24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (*we conclude that the old self of the flesh is dead*).

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

The old self of the flesh is dead – it was crucified with Christ. This includes all the deeds committed by the flesh in the past and the passions and desires of the flesh. We do not allow these things to dominate or rule in the life we now live. The life we now live we live by the faith of Jesus Christ who bought us with a price. It is the newly created spiritual self that gives life to our physical bodies so that we can serve within the body of Christ.

We died to the law – any and all religious law. The legalism of religion does not bring life. In a moment we will find out what religious legalism does produce. It should be clear that the God and Father of Jesus Christ our savior did not give us religious law or legalism, but He set us free from the bondage of religion.

What does religion and legalism produce? Turn to 2 Corinthians 3:4

The “we” and “us” in the following verses refer to Paul and Timothy who are writing this epistle of 2nd Corinthians.

4 Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God.

5 Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God,

6 who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter (*letter of the law of Moses, religious law*) but of the Spirit. For the letter (*the law of Moses, religious law*) kills, but the Spirit gives life.

There is no salvation in religion or religious law, because the flesh is not able to perform the law. All of humanity needs a savior. The law of Moses and all religious law kills, but the new spiritual covenant, the new spiritual self gives LIFE.

2 Corinthians 3:7

7 Now if the **ministry of death**, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory (*exercised power*) that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory (*exercised power*), which was being brought to an end, (*the ministry of death, the law of Moses, religious law, was brought to an end; it is no longer in effect*)

8 will not the **ministry of the spirit** have even more glory (*exercised power*)?

9 For if there was glory (*exercised power*) in the **ministry of condemnation** (*the law of Moses, religious law*), the **ministry of righteousness** must far exceed it in glory (*exercised power*).

10 Indeed, in this case, what once had glory (*exercised power*) has come to have no glory (*exercised power*) at all, because of the glory (*exercised power*) that surpasses it.

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THERE IS NO GODLY EXERCISED POWER IN RELIGION OR IN RELIGIOUS LEGALISM, WHICH ONLY PRODUCES CONDEMNATION AND DEATH.

2 Corinthians 3:11

11 For if what was being brought to an end (*religious legalism*) came with glory (*exercised power*), much more will what is permanent (*the ministry of the spirit*) have glory (*exercised power*).

Exercised spiritual power is required to do the good works which God prepared for us before the ages began, to faithfully, effectively, consistently, perform.

1 Corinthians 2: 12 states:

12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit (*the newly created spiritual self*) who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

Salvation and the newly created spiritual self, were freely given to us by God. Those good works prepared for us by God, before the ages began were freely given us by God. The ability to walk by the spirit and perform these good works was freely given us by God. This is some of what walking by the spirit is all about. We can understand what we have received from God, we can understand what he wants us to do, we can serve in the body of Christ with exercised spiritual power according to His Will.

Turn to Acts 6

Understanding the things freely given us by God and performing the works that He prepared for us is just two reasons that we have the gift of holy spirit. Remember that God will do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think, according to the power that works in us. There are many more benefits to walking by the spirit. This teaching is mainly dealing with the spiritual abilities we have to carry out the will of God.

God went to work in us and now we can perform profitable work for Him, serving in the body of Christ. Now we will examine some examples of believers walking by the spirit to serve in the body of Christ according to the will of God.

Acts chapter 6 has the first record of the qualifications of an administrator in the body of Christ. It is the first record of how the administrators were selected and how they were appointed. The duties they were to perform is recorded as well.

Acts 6:1

1 Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.

Who was administering and overseeing the daily distribution? Back in Acts 4:34 and 35 is the answer – I will read it to you:

Acts 4:34

34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold

35 and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

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So who exactly was overseeing the distribution? The apostles. Somehow, the Greek speaking Jewish widows were being neglected in the distribution, so they spoke up about it.

Acts 6:2

2 And the twelve (*apostles*) summoned the full number of the disciples and said, “It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables.

The apostles were visionaries, called to perform specific functions within the body of Christ. A visionary is not an administrator; administering is not his or her expertise. Although administration was not their best skill, that did not keep them from doing whatever work was needed. The apostles recognized that it was time to get help and together they took steps to correct the problems. They were not insulted or offended by the widows when they communicated the problem with the distribution. In the next two verses the apostles speak to the believers about the solution to this situation. These verses are great examples of words of wisdom given by revelation.

Acts 6:3

3 Therefore, brothers (*and sisters, you the believers*), pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.

4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

The apostles were to go to the body of Christ to find the assistance that they needed. They did not keep to themselves or to their own “spiritual class”. They did not hunt for other apostles to take on this work. There were to be seven men selected to administer the daily distribution; this would be their duty. The believers were to select the seven men and the apostles would then appoint them for this work. How did the believers know who to select? As human beings, our five senses are not capable of detecting any kind of spirit, whether it is holy or not. There are two ways in which the believers could know if a person was full of the spirit or not. First, by the operation of holy spirit called spiritual discernment; God could give a believer revelation regarding the spiritual qualities of the other person in question. The other way is that we can see the effects of the operation of the new spiritual self by the manifestation of holy spirit. Those nine aspects of the manifestation of holy spirit **can** be detected by the senses.

These seven men were supposed to be especially adept at spiritual wisdom and by implication, spiritual believing. The wisdom received by revelation was carried out by spiritual believing, just as the apostles were demonstrating in this record.

In addition, the men were to have a very good reputation among the believers.

Turn to Acts 5.

Now, don't get the impression that the apostles are hiding in an office somewhere praying and reading their Bible all day. The apostles mentioned that they were preaching the word of God, devoting themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word. That may sound ok, but just what does this really mean?

Acts 5:12

12 Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they (*the apostles*) were all together in Solomon's Portico.

13 None of the rest (*of the believers*) dared join them (*as if they were apostles as well*), but the people held them in high esteem.

14 And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and

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women,

Acts 5:15

15 so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them.

16 The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

This is what the apostles meant when they said that they were preaching the word of God, devoting themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word. This is the work that walking by the spirit was enabling them to do. The apostles had been taking time out from this work in order to oversee the daily distribution.

Turn back to Acts 6.

There is nothing in the record between chapter 5 verse 12 and chapter 6 verse 4 which indicates that the apostles quit ministering in the manner recorded in Acts 5:12. They kept ministering this way on a regular or daily basis.

Acts 6:5

5 And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they (*the whole gathering*) chose Stephen, a man full of ~~faith~~ (*believing – we have all received the same measure of faith*) and of the holy spirit (*the new spiritual self*), and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch.

6 These they set before the apostles, and they (*the apostles*) prayed and laid their hands on them.

The praying and laying on of hands was not a religious ceremony. These actions were by revelation; this was more spiritual wisdom and believing. This action indicated to the people that the apostles were confirming the believers choice and that these men were indeed appointed to oversee the daily distribution.

In Acts and the epistles there are several records of how administrators are to be selected and appointed. About the only thing that all these records have in common is that it is the visionaries who have the responsibility to ascertain the qualifications of the administrators. It is the visionaries who are to do the appointing. These responsibilities are accomplished as the visionary walks by the spirit.

Acts 6:7

7 And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the ~~priests~~ (*Judeans*) became obedient to the faith.

8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, **was doing** great wonders and signs among the people.

As Stephen carried out his duty, administering the daily distribution, he continued to walk by the spirit. Who did the great wonders and signs among the people? The scripture records that it was Stephen who was doing these works. His spiritual self was full of grace and power with which he did great works among the people. Stephen was performing the good works mentioned in Ephesians 2.

Acts 6:9

9 Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia (*Saul's home district*)

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and Asia, rose up and disputed with Stephen.

Acts 6:10

10 But they could not withstand the wisdom and the spirit with which **he** was speaking.

Stephen became a target of the rulers of the darkness of this world. They began moving in these religious leaders to obstruct and withstand the truth of the word of God and the power of God which was working in Stephen. This is a devil spirit attack against the word of God. The devil spirits could not withstand the wisdom and the spirit with which Stephen was speaking. He was speaking by revelation, especially with wisdom, spiritual discernment and believing.

We are in a spiritual war. This war requires spiritual armor in order to effectively move and stand against the enemy. These two verses are a good example of a man of God clothed and functioning with the full armor of God.

Now, Stephen was not an apostle. Up to this point, as far as can be determined, he had been serving as a believer, then he began serving as an administrator. He was already well known for his wisdom and believing, so it was not his appointment as an administrator which gave him some special anointing so he could serve more effectively. The point is that you do not have to be an apostle or an administrator to serve effectively with great grace and power.

Turn to Acts 8

If you read the record of the apostle Paul in Athens, Acts 17:16 – 34, you will read of a man of God, walking by the spirit, serving with great grace and power. Those intellectuals in Athens who attempted to stand against Paul and the word of God he was speaking, could not withstand the wisdom with which he spoke.

However, there is no mention of any great signs, miracles, or wonders being performed by Paul in Athens. The absence of the signs, miracles and wonders does not mean that Paul walked any less powerfully than when he served in Ephesus in Acts 19.

When we walk by the spirit, we walk as directed by the head of the body of Christ, which is Christ Jesus. That is exactly what Paul did when he was in Athens and when he was in Ephesus.

Now we will see what Philip did after becoming an administrator.

Acts 8:1

1 And Saul approved of his (*Stephens*) execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they (*the church*) were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

2 Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him.

3 But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

4 Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

In situations like these, there is a choice to be made. Some would say that the believers should stay and fight against the persecution. How did the believers know that they should leave? They were walking by the spirit. They had guidance to go.

Acts 8:5

5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ.

How did Philip know where to go and what to do? He was walking by the spirit – no one was standing over him barking orders and telling him what to do. We read before that he was adept at spiritual

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wisdom and spiritual believing. He did not stop walking by the spirit just because there was pressure from the rulers of the darkness of this world. He did not get distracted, but kept serving.

Acts 8:6

6 And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that **he** did.

7 For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed.

Acts 8:8

8 So there was much joy in that city.

When people get delivered from spiritual and physical torment they can have great joy. God wants people to be delivered and set free.

Acts 8:9

9 But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic (*energized by devil spirit power*) in the city and amazed (*deceived*) the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great.

This man Simon had ministered the unclean devil spirits and other devil spirits to the people by way of deceiving devil spirits. The exorcists and spiritualists who do such work do not work for free. They get paid very well for their work.

Acts 8:10

10 They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the power of God that is called Great.”

11 And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed (*deceived*) them with his magic.

The result of the deception is that Simon, the man was magnified as being the power of God. Did God receive any worship? No! The god of this world received the worship.

Note the difference in verse 6 – the people paid attention to **what** Philip said.

Acts 8:12

12 But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

They believed what Philip was preaching. He led them to Christ, not to himself. Philip was not attempting to promote himself, his leadership skills or his spiritual skills. He was promoting Jesus Christ.

What was Simon attempting to promote? He was promoting himself, his income, his spiritual skills, his leadership skills. The whole city was following Simon into spiritual and physical ruin. He led people away from the worship of God to the slavery of idolatry. That is the story of religion in our day and time as well.

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Acts 8:13

13 Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles (*Philip*) performed, he was amazed (*this was not a deception*).

14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received (*subjectively; they did not manifest anything*) the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John,

People in Samaria believed and were born again. They had received the gift of holy spirit, but they had not manifested holy spirit. The believers had not spoken in tongues. Something was stopping them from their right to manifest power from on high. The devil was continuing to hang on, determined to continue to steal the worship that was due the one true God and Father of Jesus Christ.

Philip knew that there was a spiritual problem, but he did not know what it was. He did not blame himself or search himself for defects. He continued to walk by the spirit and let the apostles know what was happening. Philip received help from the resources within the body of Christ.

The apostles were also walking by the spirit. By revelation, by spiritual believing, they came to help.

Acts 8:15

15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive (*objectively, into manifestation*) the holy spirit,

16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received (*into manifestation*) the holy spirit.

The apostles were especially adept at spiritual wisdom, spiritual believing, and spiritual discernment. By revelation, they were able to discern the spiritual cause of the problem, by revelation they received the instructions on how to remove the problem. Then, by spiritual believing they carried out the instructions and booted out the devil spirits of bondage. After the cause was removed, the believers were unbound, free to manifest holy spirit. They were free to speak in tongues and manifest power from on high. Finally, the believers were free to worship God in spirit and in truth. They were no longer enslaved to the rulers of the darkness of this world.

You can see from these records that it is the will of God that the believers are to walk by the spirit in order to carry out the good works mentioned in Ephesians 2. Here are examples of what those good works are and the results of those works.

These records vividly illustrate how the power of God moves within the church, the body of Christ and the positive results. They also illustrates how the god of this world moves within the organizations of legalistic religion and the murderous results.

Turn to John 3

To close, I will quote some words on this subject written by John Brown:

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John 3:8

8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

When you walk by the spirit, neither your habit patterns nor lifestyle can be predicted or controlled. To be restrained by the vision, the message of the Word of God as opened to us by holy spirit and true visionaries, is our confidence for our lives and freedom.

Proverbs 29:18 from the **New Living Translation**

When people do not accept divine guidance, they run wild.

But whoever obeys the law (the Word of God as opened to us by holy spirit and true visionaries) is joyful.