

# (Romans) Walk in the Spirit

by Brian Brodersen

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*The struggle of the unregenerate person in Romans 7 is not the experience of a Christian, but rather a description of one who is trying to live up to God's spiritual requirements in their own power.*

**Duration:** 47:39

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Romans 7:12-23

**Topics:** "Spiritual Freedom", "Christian Discipleship"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares two personal experiences that led him to a realization about his approach to preaching. The first was encountering a man named Jack who seemed to be having a nervous breakdown due to spiritual practices like fasting and praying. The second was being asked to do a memorial service for his cousin who was killed in a gang fight, and initially planning to condemn the attendees to hell. However, he had a change of heart and preached a message about God's love instead. The speaker then goes on to discuss four reasons why Christians often feel defeated: lack of understanding of their freedom in Christ, self-reliance, lack of spiritual discipline, and legalism.

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## Transcript

Let's turn to Romans 7 again tonight. And as I mentioned last week, I wanted to take one more look at the 7th chapter of Romans because this is really critical. And I really feel like we need to really get a hold of what the Apostle is talking about here.

And it's one of those things that if we grasp this stuff, it's going to really bring a powerful work of God's grace in our lives. And so I wanted to revisit it. Let's pick up in verse 12.

Let me just read from 12 on through 23. Therefore the law is holy and the commandment holy and just and good. Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not.

But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand.

For what I will to do, that I do not practice. But what I hate, that I do. If then I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good.

But now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, nothing good dwells. For to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good, I do not find.

For the good that I will to do, I do not do. But the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God, according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity, or to bondage to the law of sin, which is in my members.

As we looked at this chapter in our previous study, we concluded, you remember, that Paul is not describing the experience of a Christian here, but rather the experience of one who has become aware of the spiritual nature of God's requirements, and is laboring under the principle of law, trying to obtain victory over sin. And I pointed out to you how in verse 25, Paul really sort of sums up the best that you could possibly do under the law. The best you could possibly do is, so then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin.

Now some of you realized this in the study last week, some of you maybe are still wondering about it, but the approach that we took and the conclusions that we drew are quite different than how Romans 7 has normally been taught. And so I know for some of you it was a little bit of a, maybe a shock to hear me saying some of the things that I was saying. Maybe you disagreed, or maybe you thought it through, and maybe you saw there's another side to it.

But again, I want to go back and emphasize that I think if you look at the text, forget what you've experienced. Let's just look at the text. That's how we determine what is really being talked about here.

You see the danger sometimes is that we draw conclusions based upon things we experience rather than upon what God's word has said. I'll give you an example. I have had numerous people tell me that Christians can be demon-possessed, and I've contended with them.

And I've said, you know, there's no scriptural support for that. They say, well, I don't know about that, but I know that Christians could be demon-possessed because I've seen it. So here you have a person insisting that something is true because of an experience rather than because of what God's word says.

And we always have to go back to what the scriptures are saying. That's where we're going to find the real answer. Now, when we look at Romans 7, as I mentioned, Paul is describing things that we have experienced to some extent as Christians.

But we have to be careful not to draw the wrong conclusion because of our experience. We have to look closely at the text itself. And as we do that, I personally am convicted that Paul is not describing the experience of a Christian.

He is describing, as we've pointed out, what it would be like to try to be justified under the law. But we do as Christians at times have similar experiences, not identical, but similar. And then, as I said, we make the mistake of rather than letting the text speak, letting the scripture speak, we read our experience into it.

Now, to be sure, Christians have struggles that bear resemblance to what Paul describes here. But as I said again, they are not identical. And I'm going to give you three reasons why they're not.

They're similar, and we'll talk about that. But they're not identical for these three reasons. Number one, these are the struggles of one who is carnal.

Paul says it right here in verse 14, for we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal. Now, the word carnal is another word for fleshly, would be another way to translate that word. Now, when we use that term carnal, we have to be careful that we understand that it can be used in different ways.

Now, Paul uses carnal in different ways. Here, he clearly uses it to refer to the natural man. That's what he's talking about.

Because notice the description. He says, I am carnal, sold under sin. That's a description of the natural man.

The natural man is under the authority of sin. Now, he uses the term carnal, and speaking to the Corinthians, he uses it in a slightly different way. And speaking to the Corinthians, he uses it in a way where he, I think he believes them to be Christians, but they're not behaving like Christians.

And so, he says to them, are you not carnal and behaving as mere men? Now, just like we use words that in the context mean one thing at this particular time, and then in a different context, it means something else. So, that's what we have here with Paul's use of the word carnal. So, we are no longer carnal, sold under sin.

The ninth verse of the eighth chapter tells us that you are not in the flesh, or we could translate it, you are not carnal. You are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the spirit of God dwells in you. So, being in the flesh and being carnal are synonymous.

Paul's talking to a person who is not a believer in the regenerated sense. They're still in that state of being dominated by sin. Secondly, these are the struggles of one in whom nothing good dwells.

You remember what he said there? In my flesh, there dwells in me, that is in my flesh, nothing good dwells. But again, look at Romans 8, 9. But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the spirit of God dwells in you. So, you see, I really can't say as a believer that they're in my flesh, nothing good dwells.

Where does the spirit of God reside? It resides in me. And so, as an unbeliever, there is nothing good in my flesh. But now, as a believer, God has imparted his nature to me, and he is dwelling in me.

So, it would be inaccurate to say that if Paul was speaking as a Christian. And then thirdly, these are the struggles of one who is bound. For the good that I will to do, I do not do.

But the evil I will not to do, that I practice. I see another law on my members, warring against the law of my mind, bringing me into captivity or into bondage. See, Paul's describing a person who is bound.

And that, of course, is contradictory to what he said in chapter 6, as we previously looked at. But remember, Paul said to us in the sixth chapter, do not let sin reign in your mortal body. But here in chapter 7, he's describing a person who doesn't want sin to reign in their mortal body, but has no power to prevent that from happening.

The good that I will to do, I do not do. The evil that I don't want to do, that I do. That's not a Christian.

If that's the Christian life, we're all in bad shape, big trouble. If that's all that Jesus came to do was enable us to delight according to the law of God in our minds, but in our flesh, we have to be captive to the law of sin. Now, of course, I don't think any of us would agree with that.

And rightfully so, because that's not the case. So for these reasons, again, Paul is not describing a believer, but a man who has come to the realization that God's requirements are spiritual and is trying to live up to that standard in his own power as a natural man, a man who's not regenerate, a man who is not born in the spirit. Now, what is the struggle that we go through as Christians that is similar to this, but not identical to it? Well, Paul told us about the struggle that we have as Christians in Galatians 5.17. It's the battle between the flesh and the spirit.

Now, in Galatians 5.17, Paul said, for the flesh lust against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. And these are contrary to one another so that you do not do the things that you wish. So we have a similar experience.

We have those times when this battle is raging and we find ourselves doing things that we know we shouldn't do, we don't want to do. But the difference is I'm not bound to it. I'm not stuck in that position.

I have an exit. I have an ability to overcome it. The other person has no ability to overcome it.

That is just where they have to remain. With my mind, I serve the law of God. With my flesh, the law of sin.

That's just the permanent situation. We have a battle that takes place, but we can be victorious in the battle because he doesn't simply tell us that the flesh lust against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh and these are contrary and so on. Then he goes on to tell us, walk in the spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

If you walk in the spirit, in other words, he's saying you will not be in that dilemma of wanting to do something that you can't do and not wanting to do things that you end up doing. Now, the non-Christian, an unregenerate person, which is essentially a non-Christian, but of course you have lots of people in churches who would think they're Christians and would say they're Christians if you asked them, but the fact of the matter is they're not Christians because they're not regenerated. A Christian is somebody who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, born of the Spirit, indwelt by the Spirit.

Now, the unregenerate person possesses a fallen sinful nature. The Christian is a partaker of the divine nature, according to Peter. We have become partakers of the divine nature.

God has actually, he has planted his nature within us. That's what it is to be born again. The life of God is planted in the soul of man.

Now, the Christian, you see, now possesses this dual thing. I have this new nature that's been implanted in me, but I've still got this flesh. I've still got this sinful thing that's with me that, as we looked at in Romans 6, it is dead, but it's not dead practically unless I reckon it to be so.

I have to consider that to be a reality and I have to act upon it. Now, the sinful nature is rendered powerless as I yield to the new nature. That's the way it works.

Yielding to the new nature renders the old nature powerless. Why is it though, why is it that Christians often live in defeat? Well, there are four possibilities. Could be one of them, could be all of them, but there

are four things that contribute to Christians living defeated lives.

Number one is simply ignorance. Some Christians are just simply ignorant. They do not know that they've been set free from the power of sin.

That understanding hasn't come to them. And you see this, when you have people who are biblically uneducated, untaught, you find that there's all kinds of, that term we use, there's all kinds of carnality there. You look at a person and you talk to them and you know they're a believer and you sense that they truly do love the Lord, but then you look at their lives and there's all kinds of junk there.

There's all kinds of clutter. There's sin and there's a constant battle and a struggle and most of the time they're living in some defeat. Well, it could simply be ignorance.

They've never been taught. They've never been told. They've never understood that you have to reckon the old man to be dead, that the old man was crucified with Christ, past tense, it's a done deal, but I've got to consider that to be a reality.

And so when the enemy comes and the flesh rises up, instead of saying, oh no, I'm dead to that, they don't know what to do. They just go, oh well, here we go again. And then they sin and then they fall into condemnation and it's this vicious cycle.

You remember Abraham Lincoln and the proclamation of emancipation. He pronounced that the slaves were free, but did you know that for many, many years afterward, people lived on in slavery? Why? Because they were ignorant. They didn't know the proclamation had been made.

They'd never heard about it. They were technically free, but practically they were still in bondage and that's the case sometimes with us. Secondly, we are defeated because of self-reliance and this is a very common thing.

We live in defeat because we depend on ourselves to conquer the flesh and guess what? You can't do it. But we think we can do it. We think, no, I'm better than that.

I can get a handle on that. I shouldn't be doing that. I'm better than that.

You know, maybe I lose my temper. Maybe I lose my cool. Then I say, man, I'm better than that.

I'm a better guy than that. I'm going to get that under control. That's the wrong way to go about it because guess what's going to happen? You're never going to get it under control because what you have at that moment is you have the flesh battling against the flesh.

So it's a very real thing that self-reliance can lead you to defeat. Remember what Paul said in warning the Corinthians, he said, he said, if any man thinks he stands, let him take heed lest he fall. He's talking about the man who's confident in himself.

Oh, that had never happened to me. Oh, I'm above that. Oh, no way.

I could never be touched by that. The guy who says that it's not long before he's right there falling right into that very thing he said he'd never do. Why is that? Because he's trusting in the flesh.

Remember Peter, Jesus said, you're all going to deny that you know me. Peter said, not me. These guys could see that they're not as strong as I am.

I'll never deny you Lord. Who was the one that denied him? We don't read about any of the other guys denying him. They were probably going, oh, it's probably me.

Oh gosh, I'm so weak. Peter's like, I'm not that weak. These guys are a bunch of weaklings.

I'd never do that. But it was his self-confidence that brought him down. And that's what happens to people today.

They're relying on themselves. Thirdly, it can, and sometimes is simply a lack of discipline. I am not disciplining myself.

I am just approaching my life, my spiritual life, slothfully. I'm being lazy. I'm not feeding the spirit.

I'm not exercising myself in godliness. Remember Paul said to Timothy, exercise yourself to godliness. Bodily exercise profits a little bit, but godliness is profitable in all things, exercising ourselves to godliness.

And of course, if we don't, if we're not disciplined in our time in the word of God, if we're not disciplined in prayer, if we're not connected with people in fellowship, if we're not actively serving God, then we're not going to be spiritually in shape and we're going to be vulnerable to falling and being defeated. The fourth thing, and this is one that I really want to have you understand tonight. The fourth reason why Christians are often defeated is because of legalism.

Now this is really key right here, so listen closely. Whenever I begin to relate to God in a legalistic manner, I move in a practical sense from the realm of grace into the realm of law. Whenever I start to try to relate to God in a legal sense, in a legal fashion, practically speaking, I move from the realm of grace into the realm of law.

Whenever I move into the realm of law, sin automatically has dominion over me and I'm defeated. That's why people are defeated so often, because they move into the realm of law. And once I'm back in the realm of law, then I'm back into the realm of works.

And once I'm in the realm of works, I'm defeated because sin is stronger than I am. Sin gets the upper hand on me again. Do you know this is an amazing thing? You see, legalism, of course, the people, a person who is legalistic or bound in legalism never sees it that way.

They don't realize what the case is with them. But this is a fact. Amongst legalistic people, you find the most sin.

It's amazing. Now, they might not do A, B and C, but D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, and right on through the rest of the alphabet, they have no control over that. You know, they've got these areas that this and this and that.

But then you look at their lives and there's all kinds of sin in other places. I remember years ago, Jimmy Swaggart, remember that whole scandal came out about his adulterous activity and all that. Did you ever hear that guy preach against adultery? Well, he could preach against adultery like nobody's business.

And he brought down that heavy word. And man, you know, all of these rules and you stay away from this. And, you know, all this legal thing was set up.

And you find out that he's, everything he's preaching about, he's doing the opposite of it. It's legalism. Now, what is legalism? Legalism is to require more of ourselves or others than God does.

Legalism is to be more strict than God. And here's what legalism does. Legalism quenches the spirit and gives rise to the flesh.

That's why the Apostle Paul fought legalism with as much energy and tenacity as he fought the other side of the coin, which would be license or excess. He fought it with just as much rigor and determination. You know, we tend to, and rightfully so, we, you know, we want to fight against sin.

And so we preach against the works of the flesh and all those kinds of things. But legalism is a work of the flesh. That's what it is.

It's just, it's like a religious version of the work of the flesh. The guys that crucified the Lord, they were religious men. They were devoutly religious.

They were experts in the law. They were legalist extraordinaire, and they had no place for God. Legalism is a deadly thing.

Legalism always produces the works of the flesh, never the fruit of the spirit. You see, when a person is legalistic, you're either proud of your spirituality and looking down on all of those who aren't as spiritual as you are, or you're envious and resentful of those who are more spiritual. That's where you're at when you're caught up in legalism.

Legalism cuts off the flow of the spirit, and that in turn gives rise to the flesh. You see, once the flow of the spirit is cut off in my life, then I'm right back in the realm of the flesh. Then I'm operating in the realm of the flesh.

Legalism is very, very subtle. I mean, occasionally you can see it. It's right in your face, but a lot of times it's, there's a subtlety to it.

But the essence of it is trying to relate to God or thinking that I'm relating to God or pleasing God based upon my performance rather than His grace. Now, you might be doing all the right things, and that's a good thing to do. But the moment you start thinking that because I'm doing all the right things, I'm winning favor with God, I'm getting points with God, I'm setting myself up to be more loved by God, more accepted by God, more blessed by God, or that sort of thing, then my whole thinking process is wrong.

Because not that I shouldn't do those things, I should. But even when I'm doing them, I should never think that this is commending me to God. I should just simply remember that this is what I'm supposed to do.

It's no big deal. But you see, we get into this works thing, and then we get into a pride thing, and then we get into God, you owe me. And then when God doesn't give us what we think He owes us, then we're angry at God.

How dare God not bless me? After all, doesn't God know all that I've done for Him? What's the matter with Him? And then you can see hostility rise up against God. How does that happen? Well, it happens again because we're talking about a person who's in the flesh. They're in the realm of the flesh.

Legalism cuts off the flow of the Spirit, and that in turn gives rise to the flesh. That is why the Apostle Paul was so forceful in his rebuke of the Galatians. And you remember what he said to the Galatians in chapter 3, verses 1 through 3, he said, O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified, this only I want to learn from you.

Here's the question. Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? Now, the Galatians are an interesting case study here because Paul goes into the region of Galatia with the gospel, and the Galatians were Gentiles. He goes in, he preaches the simple gospel.

These Gentiles turn to Christ. They have this great experience with God. The Spirit of God is poured out upon them.

The power of God, the gifts of the Spirit, all of this stuff is happening. It's beautiful. It's wonderful.

But then these Judaizers come into town after Paul leaves, and they say, O Paul, he fooled you. He didn't tell you the whole story. Jesus is good, and we need him.

But we also need to abide by the laws of Moses. And if you people really want to know God, if you really want to experience the power of God, you've got to get yourself circumcised, and you've got to start keeping the law. And the minute they embraced that message, the flow of the Spirit was cut off.

That's what Paul's talking to him about here. Having begun in the Spirit, are you going to be made perfect by the flesh? He says, O foolish Galatians, you had this wonderful start. The Spirit of God was flowing, but once they went into a legal approach, it just killed the whole thing.

That's what happens to us sometimes. God's blessing. We're in the Spirit.

We're just flowing along. Good things are happening. And then for some reason or another, I get into this bondage to some sort of law.

This happened to me. I remember. I remember becoming a Christian and just, you know, the simple gospel and just the simple word of God.

And it was also wonderful and great. And the Spirit was flowing. And after some time passed, and you know, I was just happy to be a Christian and happy to know the Lord and happy to experience His grace and His work in my life.

But somebody came along and said, Hey, you know what, Brian? Have you read this book right here? You ought to read this book. I thought, well, I don't know. You know, I've got my Bible.

I like reading my Bible. I feel like maybe I should keep reading my Bible. Well, yeah, okay.

But if you ever really want to know what's going on, you want the deeper life, you got to read this book. And for quite a while, I did pretty well in resisting that. I just thought, no, I don't need that.

I just need to stay in the Word. But the offers kept coming and the encouragement kept coming. And finally, one day I just sort of broke down and said, Oh, well, let me read that book.

And then I read another book. And then I read another book. And then I read another book.

And these books were all books about the deeper life, how to be more spiritual, how to really love God and know God and all that sort of thing. You know, noble stuff. I mean, this is, everybody would like to know how to love God and know God better.

But what I found is after a few months of reading this stuff, I completely lost my joy. I completely lost the power of God in my life. The simple gospel became the most complicated thing in the world.

I no longer could just share with people and tell them God loved them. I had to take them from Genesis to Revelation. And then even when I got to lead them in the sinner's prayer, I had to tell them at the end that I don't think you're saved because you probably weren't as sincere as you should have been.

And, uh, you know, so this is tough, this Christian thing, it's really hard, you know, few of us can do it. I'm one of the, one of the few. And I literally got into this place of bondage that was unbelievable.

I was reading these books and they were saying, you know, you can pray anytime, but your prayers are more effective if you're praying after midnight. Between 1 and 5 a.m. is the most effective time for prayer. Okay.

And, you know, all, all kinds of things like that. A few of, a few friends and I, we just bought into this stuff, hook, line, and sinker. We were walking around here.

We were so self-righteous. It was unbelievable. We didn't see it.

I'd go home and I'd say to Cheryl, this is when we were newly married a couple of years. How much of your Bible did you read today? That's about how it went over. Did you pray today, honey? You know, the house doesn't look very clean.

What have you been doing? And we'd get in these fights, you know, and I remember one time she was just telling, she said, you are so arrogant. You are so prideful. And I looked at her and I said, honey, I am one of the most humble people around.

I'm, I'm not kidding. I said that to her. And we, we were, we were in the holy club, man.

We were in the spiritual club. We were into the true gospel. Chuck, you know, man, Chuck was into this grace thing.

He was, you know, I would say stuff to Chuck. I can't believe the stuff I used to say to him back then. And now I think back, poor guy, you know, he'd look at me probably going, this is my son-in-law.

Oh no. I remember one time driving with him and we were really into a, an author back then named Leonard Ravenhill. Leonard Ravenhill wrote a book, Why Revival Terry's, tell you how to have revival for sure.

And Sodom had no Bibles and all of these, you know, heavy, this is heavy stuff, man. This is revival stuff. This is deeper life stuff.

And I remember driving with Chuck one day and saying, you know, Chuck, I've been thinking about it. I, we need to get Leonard Ravenhill over at the church here. You know, sometimes I think we've got sort of a cheap grace thing going, you know, we need to get a, we need to get a new perspective, you know, and, you know, he'd just sit and listen to it.

I don't know what he was thinking, but, and in my mind, I got to a point where I was thinking, you know, poor pastor Chuck, he just doesn't quite get it. He's got this grace thing all distorted and man, you know, the best message that you could give would be one that would just cause everybody to squirm in their seat. And I'll never forget one night over in the fellowship hall, giving a Bible study.

And I preach from Exodus 20, the law and the mountain that quaked and burned and smoked and the fear and the dread and just driving that home and walking away, just feeling like, man, I got them tonight though. Got those sinners for you, Lord. They know they're sinners.

And I got to a point where I really thought that that was what I was supposed to be doing. Some of you guys know Jack Hibbs. Jack was part of the holy club and he was even more excessive than I was because, you know, if I couldn't stay awake in the morning, I'd just go back to bed and figure I'd worry about it later.

Jack would get up at 4 or 5 a.m. and because he couldn't stay awake, he would put two inches of ice-cold water in his bathtub and then he would go into his tub and sit and pray in the ice-cold water. Now, all of this started to unravel with two things. One day Jack walked in and I'll tell you, as he began to talk to me, all of a sudden I thought, this poor guy's having a nervous breakdown.

He's not sleeping. He's not eating. We're fasting.

We're praying. We're doing all this stuff. And he was weird.

And I just said, hey buddy, you better go home and get some sleep, you know. That was one thing that happened. The next thing that happened was a family member of mine, my cousin, 17 years old, he was murdered in a gang fight.

He was killed in a fight. And I was called upon to do the memorial service. And so I went to do this service and there were probably about three to five hundred people that came to this memorial.

And I was convinced, I was so deluded, I was convinced that my task was to get up in front of these people and basically let them all know they were going to hell. That was my task. So I got my notes together.

I got my message ready. I was sitting in the back room of the mortuary there. And I'm going over my notes and I'm anticipating getting out there to this group of people and letting them know that God hates them and he's going to send them to hell.

That was pretty much the gist of what I wanted to tell. See, I can talk about this stuff from experience. So I'm sitting there and suddenly something came over me.

The director of the funeral home said, you know, he came back and called me, he said, it's time for you to go out. Suddenly I grabbed those notes and I watered them up, I threw them in the trash can. And I walked out and I preached a message on John 3.16 for God so loved the world.

I was so condemned after I did that. For weeks, I was in a state of depression. I felt like I let God down.

I had the golden opportunity to tell all these wretched sinners how much God hated them and I blew it. I told them God loved them. What came over me? This is how distorted I was in my thinking.

This is legalism. That's where I was. But God used that very event to begin to show me how far I had drifted into this and how far I was removed from that work of the spirit and that grace that saved me.

And through a process of time then, but that was the beginning of it, the Lord began to unravel this web that I had entangled myself in through succumbing to legalism. It's a deadly thing. It kills the spirit.

And so we want to recognize the danger of it and we want to avoid it. But now there are those who sadly haven't necessarily embraced legalism but have actually more had it imposed on them. So many people like that in churches today because from the pulpit, not grace, but legalism is being proclaimed and so it's being imposed upon them and they live in this place of guilt and condemnation because they don't understand the grace of God.

They're not being taught the grace of God. God wants to bring people out from under that burden and into the liberty that's in Jesus Christ. Remember Jesus said, take my yoke upon you and learn from me.

My yoke is easy. My burden is light. In those days, man, being a Christian to me became so heavy.

It was heavy. I don't know if you can do it. I don't know if you can handle it, man.

This is heavy stuff. Whenever you're in that place, you're obviously under a different burden than the one Jesus gives to us. So how do we have victory? Well, Galatians 5.16, we've already referred to it.

Walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Walking in the spirit, just living in the realm of the spirit. Remember we talked before, it's not about, I'm not going to do this.

I'm not going to do that. I swear I'll never do that again. I'm going to be so determined.

I am never going to. It's not that. Whenever I'm in that mode, I'm in the flesh.

Whenever I'm in that mode, I've reverted to legal, a legal approach. I've reverted to works. Whenever I'm in that mode, I've cut off the flow of the spirit.

That's not the way to approach it. The way to approach it is, man, I'm just going to dive into the things of the spirit. I'm going to just engulf my life in the things of the spirit.

I'm going to be so consumed with the things of the spirit. And when I am in that place, I will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. When I'm feeding the spirit, the spirit is dominating.

The spirit is being strengthened. And the spirit is reigning in my life. And it just, it happens by just simply feeding the spirit.

And as I feed the spirit and the spirit rules the flesh, it's not an issue. It's out of there. So, practically speaking, walking in the spirit involves knowing the truth, knowing that it's the grace of God, knowing as we'll see when we get into the eighth chapter, that there's the law of the spirit of life that's operating in me now.

And that law, that power has set me free. From the law of sin and given me the ability to live the way God wants me to live. We need to trust God and not ourselves.

We need to discipline ourselves spiritually, being immersed in the things of the spirit. We need to avoid legalism and we need to walk in obedience. Remember, legalism is putting a standard higher than God's

standard upon yourself or somebody else.

The best way to avoid that is to stay in the word of God. See, the word will keep you balanced. And the stronger your foundation is in the word, then you can glean from others, but you're wise enough, because you have the strong foundation in the word, you're wise enough to let certain things go.

I look back on those days and my biggest problem was, I wasn't mature enough or wise enough to, you know, sort of eat the meat and spit out the bones. I just ate the whole thing. I look back now and some of those guys that I used to read back in those days that sent me into this legalism, I can read them just fine today because I know that there are certain things that they said that are just, that's just their opinion.

That's just their bent. That's their legalism. I'm not embracing that.

I'm not buying into that because I've got that foundation in the word. So walk in the spirit. Just make your life all about the spirit, the things of the spirit.

Be a man of the spirit. A man of the spirit is obviously a man who's in the word. A man of the spirit is obviously a man who prays.

A man of the spirit is obviously a man who is connecting with the saints. A man of the spirit is a man who's saying, Lord, I want to, my life is yours. It's not mine.

I want to serve you. You be a man of the spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. You will not be defeated over and over again.

That experience of, I would do this, but I'm not doing it. And I know I shouldn't do that, but I am doing it. That will become less and less and less a reality in your life as you walk in the spirit.

Because as you, as you feed the spirit, the flesh grows weaker and weaker and weaker. And then you just get to a point in your life where you just realize, Hey, I'm not even going there. I'm not, I'm not even going toward the flesh.

I don't have any use for it. It's not going to help me one bit. Lord, I'm just coming to you and I'm calling upon you and I'm just leaning on your grace.

Lord, thank you that there is victory in Jesus and Lord, that it's as simple as walking in the spirit. Help us, Lord, to do that. Help us, Lord, to be men of the spirit and knowing that if we are, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

It won't happen. So Lord deliver us from legalism, deliver us from ignorance, deliver us from self-sufficiency, deliver us from laziness and plug us in to the spirit of God. Infuse us with your life so that we can walk in the victory that you have provided for us through Jesus our Lord.

We pray this in his name. Amen.

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