

Walking in the Spirit - Part 4

by Bruce Wilkinson

Bruce Wilkinson emphasizes the importance of walking in the Spirit, highlighting the need for dependence on God and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Duration: 1:08:57

Scripture: Ezekiel 36:26, Matthew 6:33, John 7:39, Romans 8:9, Galatians 5:16

Topics: "Spirit Filled"

Description

In the video, the speaker reflects on his experiences during the week, starting with an unbelievable day in Phoenix. He then discusses the need to establish healthy habits and avoid excessive television consumption. The speaker also shares his method of keeping track of spiritual disciplines, such as reading scripture and praying. He introduces various resources, including a book called 'Family Walk' for parents, a compilation of teaching articles, and a textbook on the seven laws of a teacher.

Transcript

Some people you can challenge them with something and they'll hem and haw around and may take it and may not and you're always worried, you have to check back up on them to make sure that they're following through and you may even have to help them meet the goal. Every once in a while you find one person or maybe even two that, yes, I'd like to do that. Don't worry about it, it'll be done.

The first time the nav said that I held my breath because I'd not worked with them in a concrete way and it's exactly what happened. And in the next months that followed, I learned that's the way the navs are. And it's been absolutely an incredible pleasure to work with an organization that has, as its flavor, servanthood.

That's the flavor of the navigators. It's the flavor up front, but it's also the flavor not just with you, but out there in the marketplace. They are servants.

Secondly, that I found out is they're compassionate with each other on the team. That they're always reaching out to the needs of other people all the time. Not only doing their job, but they're reaching out in ministry and caring.

And our internal staff are talking about the navs. Boy, it's great working with those people. And the third thing, and you'll appreciate this if you come from the business community especially, they're incredibly

competent.

Competent. There's an awful lot of great people who are Christian, who are called, who have great character, who are not very competent. I love those people, but don't let me work with them too much.

I love people who are called and Christian and have great godly character, but then their competence in what they do is equal to all of these. Then you have fruitfulness. These are competent people.

And on behalf of the commission, not just speaker, on behalf of the commission and all movement, we just owe a great debt to the navigators. And to Jerry and to Terry and to Lauren and Bob, Stacey, they've all added a tremendous amount of work just on top of it all. They have.

And it has been a challenge. And I have greatly seen, modeled for me, the character of Christ and the stress of too much work to get done. So thank you.

One thing I hate to do is bring books back to Atlanta. So would you please buy all of Walk Through the Bible's books downstairs before I go? They look like these. They're wonderful.

Here's one that just came out. Almost every answer for practically any teacher. 100 best articles we could find.

We looked well past 1500 articles and picked out the 100 best on how you teach. You can't name, I don't think, a greater author that's not in here. Everybody from Swindoll and Oddwell Standers and MacArthur and Gangl and Lefevre, they're all in here.

And I'd encourage you to take a look at this. Nuggets. And there's a counterpart.

There's a textbook to a course I developed. It's called The Seven Laws of a Teacher. But it's kind of meaty to chew on.

The other ones are guides to help you read the Bible. Here's the Daily Walk and Living Bible. It's been very successful.

It's also out in the King James. And it just came out in the New Revised Standard. You already know about this.

Closer Walk. You know what this is? How many don't know what this is? Closer Walk goes through the New Testament in a year. This was first.

We started this in 78. We started this. This was known as Timeless Insights when we first came out.

This is a very different purpose than this. Whole Bible, New Testament. One chapter a day.

But the purpose of this is to develop a heart for God. That isn't the purpose of this. This is spiritual maturity.

Let you understand and apply it. This is to pull your heart toward God. We spent a long time trying to figure out how do you do that? And we started pushing a noodle.

We couldn't get it. Finally decided that you don't teach somebody how to have a heart for God. You let them catch it off of somebody who had a heart for God.

And therefore we asked the question, who had a heart for God in history? And we began writing names on a blackboard. And pretty soon we filled the board and then we got in categories. And we named all the major people throughout church history that the Christian church would say, these people had a heart for God.

Then we got all their material. Got different people reading it all to say, find the nuggets of how they walk with God. Send it to us.

We had thousands of them. We picked the best. We linked that with the chapter of the New Testament and application.

So for instance, here's January one, Haddon Spurgeon, F.B. Meyer, Matthew Henry, G. Campbell Morgan. These are all the greats. John Wesley, St. Augustine.

It goes right on through. You can't Oswald Chambers, they're in here. So we're introducing you to the greats as well as the chapter of the New Testament.

Family Walk. This is the magazine in book form. This is 52 weeks, 52 topics.

Family Walk was basically started because I was frustrated with my family devotions, frustrated with my personal devotions, frustrated with my walk with God, frustrated with my family devotions. Sat down with a group of people and said, what do we wish our children knew? Sat down and just hammered it away. Came up with four categories of things we wished our children would be true about them.

What character qualities, what skills and so forth. Came up with 152, excuse me, 156. And then recategorized those, put them in three years time and wrote a week on each one.

This has been used by, oh my, millions of people. It's for parents. Dobson's been using it for years and years and years and years.

It's always an embarrassment to me. We made a tape, a couple radio programs a long time ago when this first came out and he plays it every year. People come up and say, well, how is your six-year-old son? My kid's 19 years old.

But there's so many people who are interested in it and we haven't had time to go back and do any more about it. As our children got older, I got frustrated with their walk with God. So we came out with Youth Walk and it is gutsy.

This isn't for you. This is a little bit straight forward for you. This deals with the real issues.

This talks about it all. It talks about all the eating disorders. It talks about incest.

It talks about abuse. It talks about everything. Because we felt Christianity hasn't been talked to straight to the kids like they talk about it at school.

What are they really going through? So this is straightforward. This is brand new, came out the last few months with Zondervan in the NIV. And this has got almost anything you can think of in here.

So that's for high school students. So those are down there by way of encouragement. Many folks give these for Christmas presents.

Many of our donors buy whole boxes of these and give them away. We have one guy who must have given away, I don't know, 500. And he challenges a Sunday school class and says, if you promise to read through the Bible in a year, you can have a youth, I mean a family daily walk.

So be thinking about it. Get your own family into this. Whether it's the magazines or the books, it really doesn't make any difference.

Let's change gears. Walking down the hallway last night, a man came up to me and said, this has been great, but it was a lot easier before I met you. We've been trying to share the whole concept of walking by means of the spirit, to be filled with the spirit.

And by now you ought to have a pretty clear handle on at least what I've been trying to say. That is, the spiritual life is to be walked by the spirit. It is my job to work through a great deal of effort to get in a condition by which I am able to do that.

It is him through me, but it's taken a tremendous amount of effort to enable that to happen. So never think the spiritual life is easy. It costs everything, as you heard last night.

The more you walk with God, the less and less is left of you, and the more and more is of him. And there is a whole dying to self, dying to flesh, dying to everything, and living to him. Over an umbrella, be filled with the spirit.

Once he's in you, don't grieve him. Don't quench him. Walk with him.

Don't grieve, don't quench, walk. When those things happen, you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh and the spirit of God, as you attune your ear to him, will teach, will guide, will lead, will commune, and all of the manifestations of the spirit will be in you. And you will be obedient to the scriptures.

At that time, then Jesus will fulfill his promise. All those who obey me and keep my commandments love me, and I will manifest myself to him. That's not you conjuring him up.

That's him keeping his promise. Now, as I think about grieve, quench, and walk, I think about a subset beneath it. I think of grieving is about sin, and that I must clear up sin and have a short account whenever I find myself in the process of sinning.

And when I sin, I know I'm not walking. So grieve, sin. Next part of this chart, quench not.

That's more about yourself dying to self. Ultimately, that's the key of that. Sin, self.

Walk in is not about sin, and it's not about self. It is about the spirit. That's right, the spirit.

And when I think about grieve not, I think about sin. And what's the bottom line of this category? I believe I'd use the term, and I may change this as I meditate over the next year. It is the word holiness, holiness.

As you take to the next category and you say, quench not, never say no to what he asks you to do. Self needs to be broken. What is the result of full obedience in this area of your life? It is the word brokenness.

So that you are broken like a vial of oil is broken, and the oil just comes. So it's about brokenness in you. The process of cleansing is when you really go for it, I find takes years.

The area of brokenness takes years. You can, however, become broken, and you are broken. You may have to be broken a little bit later on in different areas, but more and more holy, more and more broken.

And when I think about the spirit, and I think about what he wants from me, I come up with two words, and I think the best one is the word dependence, dependence. The other word that comes to my mind, it was used frequently as the word, at least not in scripture, but more in human vocabulary, is the word abandonment. You've abandoned yourself to the spirit.

That's a bit passive to me. I like the word active dependence, and we're gonna talk about that this morning. So those are the three parts of your life.

Don't grieve, don't quench, walk in. Handle your sin, handle yourself, handle your spirit, grow in holiness, grow in brokenness, and grow in dependence. When those happen, you will be transformed from the inside out.

Does that make sense to you this morning? Good. Now, I'd like to speak to you about walk in the spirit this morning. But I'd like to talk to you about it from a different point of view than I ever have before.

I talked about it once, and that was last week, so this is the second time I've talked about it. I want you to think about God for a minute. Somewhere back in eternity past, where there was only a trinity, then God made angelic beings with a free will.

The angelic beings, some of them sinned. At some point in time, some of those angels were cast into hell, some of them were cast out of heaven, some of them remained in heaven. And there were two categories of angels, angels and demons.

A demon was an angel who followed Satan, obviously. And it appears, although scripture doesn't say it quite like this, there appears that there was an end to the free will of the angelic beings. No longer can a good angel choose to be a bad one, and you know there's no salvation for a demon anymore.

And free will left the universe except for the trinity. Somewhere along after that, I don't know how to describe this theologically, but on a human point of view, I believe the Lord God missed the free will in his creation. Because there's something wonderful about free will.

What do I mean? Well, I'm heading back to the barn this afternoon. You know what happens with a horse, and if you've ever ridden a horse going back to the barn, as soon as their nose turns back, they're gone and they want free reign. Well, I'm heading back to the barn to see my wife and children.

And my wife and older daughter's up and visiting my son in college today because he's preaching tonight. But my younger daughter is five-year-old with my parents. So I'll drive home to the airport, drive up to Marietta, and let's say I came in and I said to Jessica, Jessica, get over here and give your daddy a kiss and tell him you love him right now.

And she looked down, yes daddy, and came over and gave me a hug, I love you daddy, and walked away. Let's say the same daddy comes home and little Jessica comes running in and jumps on me and gives me a big hug and we kiss around and talk. And she doesn't wanna get down for a long time, and I don't wanna get down either.

One is because I wanted it and told her, the other one is because she wanted to. This one brings great fulfillment. If she had no free will and could never choose to do that or not to do that, there's no flavor in it.

And I believe that God missed it. If you can say God missed something, I believe he did. And therefore he made man and he made woman, only he decided to have a baby.

You must put yourself more into what really happened. I think the Trinity talked a long time about this, because they could have made man and woman in any way they wanted. And then they came up with the idea, let's make him like us.

Ooh, won't that be something? And I imagine they talked about it. What color hair you want? I don't know. And I honestly believe that we don't understand the Trinity.

We make the Trinity not real. When everything I know about God in the Bible is very real. And I believe they talked about it.

And then I believe when they decided to do that, they talked about the nursery and they decided to call the nursery the garden. And they, instead of putting wallpaper up, put stars and clouds and sun, trees and birds. And I think God couldn't wait, personally.

And I think when they saw their child coming up for the first time, they said, oh, that's very good. Remember that? It's good, it's good, it's good, it's good, it's good. Oh, oh, oh, oh, it's my part.

Very good. And you remember from Genesis that God and man used to walk in the garden. God came to the nursery because he wanted to be with his child.

Parents can't help but want to be with their child. And the love and the affection must have been absolutely unbelievable because God loved children, especially his. Then you remember the sin.

We talked about grief last night. I can't imagine the grief when his child, children, decided to follow the very one he cast out of heaven. I can't imagine the betrayal God felt.

And then you remember as it followed through in Genesis 6, why don't you look at Genesis 6 together with me? I don't think we will abide until we understand. I don't think we'll walk with him until we understand this. Genesis 6, one of the major turning points.

Genesis 6, verse 5, then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. I've been thinking about that a lot because I believe we're headed there. Every intent, not some intent, every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

It really is, was evil all of the day, all of the time. And in verse number six, it says, the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth and he was grieved in his heart. But he wasn't just grieved because of sin, he was grieved he'd made man.

I'm sorry I had kids. And that whole issue of the Lord wrestling in his spirit with what was going on in the earth and deciding to destroy it and to bring it to nothing is a major point and the pulling back of God that I'm sorry I've made him and destroys him. The alienation that existed between parent and child.

In time, God started over a number of different times and eventually God wants to come back down. But this time he doesn't come in the person of himself. He tells him to build a tabernacle, a tent, so that he can, now don't miss this, so that he can dwell at least with his family.

He's there, but he's apart from and you gotta come to him by blood. And only the holy of holies can be visited one time a year. But God was, if you studied how the tabernacle and how the Israelites were gathered around the tabernacle, where was he? Smack in the middle.

Saying, I wish there was a way to be closer than this. Then you remember in time, the tabernacle was put away and the temple was built. And again, God was there for hundreds of years, but apart from man, because of the sin of man.

And I believe the spirit of God was grieved most of the time he was in that. Then you remember that I believe that not only did Jesus come for salvation, but I believe that God was lonely for man. And that God became a child and dwelt among them.

And we beheld him. I believe there was something about the act of the incarnation that did something in the heart of God that was unique. And that it once again showed the love of God wanting to be with his children and then to watch them reject him consistently for the goodness he did and for the truth that he spoke until he was murdered by his children.

Well, all the way in the middle of this, there's a passage in Ezekiel chapter 36 that you ought to take a look at. Ezekiel 36, right in the middle of your Bible almost, a little bit to the right. Ezekiel 36, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel 36, Old Testament.

A lot of white pages unwrinkled in a lot of Bibles here. Ezekiel's pretty good reading. Ezekiel 36, verse number 26 is a wonderful prophecy.

And it says, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you. I will take the heart of stone, talk about hardness, out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh and I will put my spirit within you. Now look at the next part of that.

I will put my spirit in you to walk in my statutes and you will keep my judgments and do them. What's the linkage? If you walk in the spirit, you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. I will put my spirit in you and I will cause you to walk in my statutes and you will keep my judgments.

So there is this desperate desire of God, I believe, I'm interpreting a little bit here, to spend time with his people, with his children and to be with them and to walk with them and to love them and for thousands of years, thousands of years, he's outside of them. And he makes this prophecy, I'm gonna come and I'm gonna rip out that hardness of heart and I'm gonna put in my spirit and you will keep my commandments ultimately because of my spirit. And then in process, Jesus Christ comes and he said, I can't give you the spirit until I am glorified.

Who knows Ezekiel? Who knows Jeremiah 31? Same prophecy. Jesus Christ goes and leaves them. It's better for you that he sends the spirit and the spirit comes in to us and take a look at 1 Corinthians 6. What then is to be our response? How should we think about this? 1 Corinthians 6, verse number 19.

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God and you are not your own. For you were bought at a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your

spirit, which are God's. Therefore, there's a picture here that's incredible that said God in the Old Testament in the middle of Israel, in the temple, in the Holy of Holies, his spirit dwelt.

And once a year, a high priest could come in. That's it. I think that that was nothing close to what the Lord wanted.

And therefore you remember the death of Christ, how the veil rent from the top to the bottom, six inches thick worth of curtain rent. God said, I am sick of it. I've paid the price.

I've bought you back from my enemy. And he then said, I don't want a temple made out of hands for me to dwell in. I want to dwell so close to my children.

I want to live absolutely in the center of them. I was in the center of the camp. I was in the center of the nation.

I am in the center of your being. And I want to be so close to you. There is no closer place for me to go than where I'm at.

Only the shocking part about it is, in the Old Testament, you could only come to God through a priest and the priest could only go once a year and commune with God. In the New Testament, we have our high priest and we can come to God as much as we want. How much does God want of us with him? Answer, all the time.

He wants to walk in the coolness of the garden of our heart all of the time. If you can believe that, then all we have to do is to get a condition where it's possible and then that will be the norm. And it will fulfill the heart of God and it will fulfill the heart of man because that's what it's made for in the beginning.

So when you and I say, let's walk with God, let's walk in the Spirit, now you have a much broader concept of what on earth is going on. For the past 4,000 years, well, since the building of the tabernacle, 1,500 BC to 2,000, 3,500 years. On the outside, in the tabernacle, in the temple, a promise coming in the flesh and then coming inside in our holy of place.

And the issue is so many of us, the side will go in a couple times a year. At the end, when it's all finished and eternity begins, look back in Revelation, chapter 21. Chapter 21 talks about the new heaven and new earth.

And I saw a new heaven, verse 1, and a new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, behold, the tabernacle of God is with men and he will dwell with them and they shall be his people.

And God himself, I love this, and God himself will be with them and be their God. It goes from the garden all the way back to the new heavens and new earth and God gets his dream fulfilled. But the point of it is, he gives us the free choice about whether or not God can have his dream fulfilled now.

It's amazing to all of us that when we think of the most glorious place in all the earth to live, excuse me, of all time, it is heaven. And heaven will be a glorious place. There'll be pleasures forevermore at his right hand and so forth.

Ultimately, what will make heaven glorious is God and being with God and being within his glory and his light and our reaction to his presence will be utter rapture forever. Isn't it incredible to realize that the same God dwells with us today and we can behold his glory today. We do not have to wait to heaven.

And that is my encouragement to all of us to realize the significance of what I've just said to you, that God desperately longs for you to walk with him personally. That God does not have favorites and that God loves every single person and longs for fellowship with us and with you individually. That he desperately loves you and that he desperately has gotten so inside of you so that he is only a breath away.

It is an era of unbelief that stops us from ever finding what's in the Holy of Holies. It is an era of sin. It is an era of unbrokenness and is an era of unbelief that says, I can't really know God like I will in heaven.

That's a lie. Yes, you can. And men and women of the ages have and you can as well.

That's the most wonderful thing about God. It's all equal for all of us. And regardless of intelligence, standing, finances, age, physical health, there's not one hindrance to coming to know God in a way that you will be absolutely encaptured with him except you don't want to.

And that is my encouragement to you that heaven can be right here for you now inside. Therefore, walk by means of the spirit. What does it mean to walk by means of the spirit? It means to be in the Holy of Holies all the time.

That's what it means. That you do not sin. That you walk with him and you depend upon him.

That anytime he touches his finger upon you and directs your attention, you say, yes, Lord, and go do it. And that you consciously, this is why I like the word dependence more than abandonment, consciously keep in contact with the Lord. The ancients used to say the word practicing the presence of God.

And that's what it is. The presence of God is there. But I need to keep myself in his presence.

That's the work. I need to keep myself in his presence. The problem is I keep darting out.

And the presence as that story I told you last night, what is the person's secret? They never left their prayer closet. What are they really saying by that? I never leave the active presence of God. Never.

Never. This person's spiritual influence was so strong in history that history records it over and over again. That when the person would walk through a group of people, the conviction of sin would follow the person.

And people sometimes would fall down and repent of their sin. You know what that really was? That was the person had died to self so much that the spirit was so powerful. That the spirit came through.

See, I believe that. I know that to be true. Does it take learning to practice the presence of God? Yes.

A great deal of it. How do you start to do this? You want to. That's the key.

Whoever desires to follow after me, you must desire him, number one. And the spirit yearns jealously for us. He will not be number two.

He will not be number two. You will not be able to walk with him if he's number two in your life over yourself, over a person, over a business, over the love of things, whatever it may be. He will not be number two and you cannot practice his presence.

It'll frustrate you and you'll quit within days. And you'll forget this nav conference because you will not want to remember it. He must be number one.

And when he is number one, your issue is, how do I stay in the presence of God? Because in his presence, there is favor and graciousness and filling and freedom and liberty and joy unspeakable. Well, you bring every thought into captivity. Where is that passage? 2 Corinthians chapter.

Let's take a look at that. 2 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 5b. I'm not going to teach on this passage.

It's just I'm going to bring it to your attention. Verse 5, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. Here's the key.

Here's the key. Bringing, that's an active word, isn't it? Bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Where do my thoughts go? Answer, everywhere.

They are out of control. And passivity and daydreaming. And of course, daydreaming is not bringing every thought into captivity and therefore it is a sin.

Anytime my thought isn't in captivity of Christ, I am sinning. Now that's an advanced sin, if you could say that. Don't worry about that early on.

You got enough to worry about with your own piles. It's true. Don't worry about this until later.

Unless you've been walking with the Lord in this and you know exactly what I'm saying then. You got to bring it. That means it's not there.

You got to go out and grab a hold of the thought. Come here. Get back into the Lordship of Christ.

Meditate upon Him. Depend upon Him actively. Come back here.

Am I obeying God in every areas of my life? Lord, is there any sin anything in Him? Or worship? Now, that's practicing the presence of God. You know how much you can practice the presence of God? All you want. The longer you practice it, the easier it becomes.

This person I was telling you about gave me the secret of what I already know, words I can understand. I never leave the prayer closet. I was talking to a close friend yesterday about this very thing back in Atlanta.

And the person, I've been trying to nurture this person with these things and I've seen a tremendous change in their life in the last two years. And they're working on this very thing. And I said to them, how are you doing on thoughts? Wow.

I had no idea how much my thoughts were never in captivity. What do you mean? It's never there except in my devotions. Right.

Therefore, how much are you walking with the Spirit? Oh, not much. Right. How are you doing? Man, it's hard work.

Don't give up. Stay at it. Stay at it.

So every time you're aware of your thoughts, listen to me, every time you're aware of your thoughts, ask yourself, where are they? Where are they? And if they're not under the activity of God, bring them under. And so finally it starts staying. Now, as I've been meditating on this and practicing this, I'm asking the Lord the question, how do you stay active in life and keep your mind captive in Christ? And I almost feel like it's a computer-like.

I'm trying to get a word picture here. How the computer can be working on an active process, and over here it's also stayed. And the hard disk is there.

It's processing. It's moving. So that you're active.

Watch this now. You're active, but you're in the presence. And the second you stop thinking and talking, you're there.

You're not here to bring yourself back. So I believe both can be true. I can be talking to you and be practicing the presence on a deeper level.

Yesterday I shared with you that a few times I recognized with people I did not have the fruit of the Spirit, which then told me I stopped this. Flesh came out. Repent.

Depend. Bring it back under. Actively depend on the Lord.

I cannot have the fruit of the Spirit on myself. I cannot do it. I am helpless.

I depend upon you for the fruit of the Spirit. Forgive me for my carnality. Now live through me.

Active dependence. Explain the truth. Depend.

Make sense? Do you know what walking by the Spirit is? Don't grieve. Don't quench. Walk in.

Walk in. Where is he? Right here. How much can you walk with him? All of the time.

When you walk with him more and more, you wake up in the middle of the night in the middle of a prayer. In the middle of it. You're not starting it.

You find yourself praying. How many have ever done that? Yes. It's true, isn't it? And you can finish a conversation with somebody and when you finish you realize you've been praying.

You have a co-processor. Two of them. Active.

Active dependence. You don't have one co-processor. You have two.

Now, I'm going to take about a few more minutes and I'm going to end. Last night when I went back, I brought maybe 25 books with me here about these kinds of things. And I've been reading them throughout the week and thinking about them.

And last night I came back to my room 1130, I think it was by the time I sat down. And I was saying, Lord, encourage my heart that I'm teaching right things. I know that it's from the Bible and it's right, but encourage me a little.

And I picked up this little book I stuck in my briefcase. Oswald Chambers, who's one of my favorite writers, an unbribed soul. And I had read this a few times in the past, 1983 and so forth.

And here's the first paragraph. Perhaps a central feature in the teaching of Oswald Chambers, a central feature, is the insistence that the true pattern for the experience of the Christian is the life of Christ. The Christian ideal, now listen carefully, it's a complex sentence.

He often writes like that. The Christian ideal is not the outward and literal imitation of Christ. It's not the outward imitation of Jesus, but it's the living out of the Christ life implanted within by, yes, exactly, by the Holy Spirit.

If you'd have heard me, you'd have heard me say, all right. Now, does spiritual maturity, do the disciplines of spiritual life help in this? Oh my, yes, big time. There are many spiritual disciplines, over 20.

I'm going to talk about three of them for about 11 minutes. One, be in the word every day, period. No secret about that, you all know that.

If you have a hard time with that, then get a Bible and read through it. Get the daily walk, get the closer walk. I'm right in the middle of going through it again this year.

Last year, I took a book of the Bible and read it every week and then a new book every week and meditated that way. The year before, that was closer walk. This year, I'm coming back to daily walk.

It's wonderful. I got so much food this morning. Look at this, so much food this morning.

Just by going through it and meditating on it. Now, the point isn't to read it. The point is to be fed in the reading of it.

There's a huge difference. Many people read the Bible and do not get fed. You read the Bible by asking the Lord, Lord, please teach me personally whatever you want today.

I'm open and want to hear from you. Quiet your heart. So be in the word every day.

We could spend hours talking about this, but I don't think you need that particularly at this point. Part of the pattern of a successful time with the Lord is to take it the same time every day and the same place every day and do the same order of things every day and do it in the morning. I used to fight this.

In fact, the last time I spoke at the president's council here, I argued about it publicly. I said, God loves night people too. And then I began to realize all the greats in the past who walk with God that I want to emulate got up real early.

So I said, Wilkinson, get up early. So I'm now a morning person. So the issue is same time, same place, same order of things.

So you do not waste your time with unnecessary effort. So you set your alarm clock early. Here's what I do just by way of an example, an improper, you know, just one.

Set the alarm clock, get up, walk out to the kitchen, get a glass of orange juice, drink it, put on the coffee, get my tools together, walk into the chair, set them down. It's cold in Atlanta right now. Get the little heater in that little corner, turn on the light, go back around, get my first cup of coffee, drink it, sit down, open the

scriptures.

Lord, wake me up. Let's have some time together, read it. Second thing I do is I write in a journal.

This has been such a help to me. I cannot tell you. Here's January 1993's journal, just started.

Every day I write in this journal, almost every day. Sometimes I get stuck in something else and have to spend the next day catching up. The journal isn't a diary.

A diary is what happened. Don't do, don't waste your time. No one cares what happened.

You won't either. You want to use a journal to grow with God. So you want to talk through it.

Okay, now here I just opened this. This is January 6th, was Wednesday. I can't tell you about this because this is about another person's sin and what happened at that meeting.

And then I responded about that. Communication became clear and affection returned. Major Christian leader was sinning and I had to go with some other people and deal with it.

Lord, how I praise you. So I respond. How I celebrate your spirit of peace and the bond of peace available to all humble themselves before you and before others.

I empty myself. I deny myself. I live to serve.

I trust in the Lord to care for his own. The loyal and loving father, how I love you for caring for me. Then I go on and tell you what happened next.

And I respond back and forth until this is a tremendous tool of reflecting about yesterday, thinking through the day what happened, praying through it, talking about it. Then if I realize that isn't true about me yet, confess it as sin, repent of it, think about a scriptural passage, write about it, ask for help and go on. Now, the first time I started this, it almost killed me.

Like, I don't like to write. Here's the secret. Take out your pen.

You buy a pen you love to write with. That's a secret. Don't get a hard one.

So I went back to the old fountain pen and put your pen on the paper and have a pre-commitment. The commitment is, do not lift your pen from the paper until one page is fully written. Now, what do you do? You put your pen there and your mind's blank.

Your mind's blank because you're so undisciplined in your mind, that's all. Put it there and say, Lord, I don't know what to write. This is going to take forever.

Please give me a couple ideas. Is this worth it? Please show me that it's worth it. This isn't going to work.

Lord, help me. And then be quiet. Do not lift your pen off the paper.

I am giving you a secret. This is a secret and this will work for you. You write exactly what you're thinking down and then you'll be quiet for a minute.

Please help me grow closer to you this year. I want to know more about the Spirit than I know. I'm afraid of all the sins that you've told me about lately.

Don't show me any more for a while. I'm most afraid of this sin right here. And then, please give me more strength to do this today.

I don't want to do this. Help me to humble myself. Help me to remind myself that you resist me if I'm proud.

I don't want to be proud, but I have a feeling that I'm, oh boy, proud. Sorry. Do you understand? Don't lift your pen until you're finished.

Now, what will begin to happen in time is you will have too much to say to the Lord. It'll frustrate you. You have, you run out of time.

So this is Wednesday. What happened Wednesday? Here's Wednesday. We were in Phoenix with Terry and Lauren and Bob and Stacey.

Here's Wednesday. It's an unbelievable day in my life. Now, Thursday was an unbelievable day.

Friday was a major day. Saturday, nothing happened. Slow and relaxing, exhausted.

Read some and enjoyed the family. Watch TV too much. Seems to choose TV to handle downtime.

I need to reestablish a manner to recoup besides television. Lord, please help me in remaking of a new ungodly habit. Okay, there it is.

The truth. Tell the truth in your journal and then hide your journal. Now, after you've done it for a while, you'll get better and better at it and begin to pay attention to the spiritual disciplines in your life.

So here's the way I'm keeping track of my spiritual disciplines. The date, the day, where I am, how many hours of work, whether I read the scripture, whether I prayed, whether I exercised, whether I dieted, how much joy I had, what my physical life was like, what my spiritual life was like, and whether I read. Those are the things I'm caring about in this particular book.

And every day I have to go back to this page and... So, Thursday, this conference started. January 21st, 1993. Thursday, where was I? Colorado Springs.

How much work? Nine and a half hours. Did I pray? Yes. Scripture? Yes.

Exercise? Yes. Diet? Yes. Joy? One half.

Physical? Poor. I'm sick. Spiritual? Oppressed by Satan for a while.

Victory? Later on. Read? Yes. So I'm trying to get a handle on what's happening in my life.

Now, last thing. You'll never walk with God if you don't become a prayer person. Guess what? Practicing the presence of God is also called prayer.

All my life I tried to pray right. And if I could pray for 20 minutes straight, that was pretty good. So I'd have a bunch of little prayers.

But I would never be able to pray the way I wanted to pray. How many of you know what I'm talking about? Yeah, I wanted to pray a lot more, but I didn't pray a lot more. And I'd confess it, and I'd try it, and it didn't work.

And finally, I was complaining to the Lord. How come I can't do this, and I want to do this, and this is right? Until I made us a prayer journal. And I tell you as one believer to another, it's absolutely the answer.

At least it was to me. Here's 1992 prayer journal. Here's the beginning of 1993.

I'm moving this to this, and I'm changing it. Every year you change it, because you've grown a lot. And how you approach God changes every year.

Here's what I did last year. You establish an order of praying that you follow every morning. Do not try to come up with a new way every day.

Forget it. You won't pray much. Have a pattern.

And if your pattern is not working, change your pattern. Until you have a pattern that's light, that you like. Here's my third pattern.

This is my fourth pattern. So what do I do here last year? First thing I do is I seek. I stop and say, Lord, I'm preparing my heart to meet you now on a very real basis.

Please quiet my heart. Give me a spirit of prayer. Let me find you as I pray.

Now, guess what I must deal with next. Yeah, there it is. Sin.

Repent of sins and recommit to obey unconditionally, completely, and instantly. So what do you do? You pause and say, okay, Lord, have I sinned any that I've not already handled since yesterday? Is there anything in the past that is still unmet? And more times than not, there'll be some revelations that you'll have to deal with. Repent.

Deal with it. When that's clean, you know you're clean. You're free to go on to the next one.

Guess what's next? Do not grieve. Do not quench. What's the root of quenching? No, this is sin.

Self. Self. Repent of self.

Die to self. Reaffirm the lordship of Christ. So what do you do here? You humble yourself.

You say, Lord, I am arrogant by nature. I am proud. I am independent, and I do not want to be independent.

I want to be fully dependent. Therefore, I empty myself of all those things. Christ emptied himself.

And therefore, I humble myself underneath you and underneath everybody that you send in my direction. I will be a servant. You are my lord.

I am a slave. You are the master. I've put my ear to the post.

I am your bond slave. I will do everything you want me to do. You die.

You tell, you express that intention. Now, I change next what I do this year. I don't know if this is right or wrong, but it's what I'm doing in 93.

I then speak to God the Father, then the God the Son, and then the God Spirit, because they have different things I want to talk to them about. So with the God the Father, I give the Lord's Prayer. Started this year.

And then talk to him about his majesty and sovereignty and his plan. And for the way that he loves and makes things happen. And that all things are in his control.

And I worship him. Then I move to the Savior. And I thank him for dying for me.

And I praise him and I worship him. And I want to be close to him. And I give myself to him.

I ask that his personality would come out of me. Then I move to the Spirit. Well, you already know what I'm asking for there.

Don't let me grieve. Don't let me quench. Help me to walk.

I actively depend. Please commune with me. Please teach me.

Please lead me. Please guide me. You already know those things now.

Ask for them. So, you've handled your sin and yourself. You've come to the Trinity.

And I'm not recommending this because I don't find necessarily people praying this way. But I'm trying it this year. Next, I move to that which opposes me.

And I pray against Satan. Because I believe the more you walk with the Spirit, the more Satan attacks you. I know that's true.

Many of you have never fought with Satan because you've never walked with God. And the stronger you are in your spirit with God, the more the enemy attacks you. Because you are dangerous.

You are big time dangerous. When you walk by means of the flesh, trying to walk the spiritual life, you are not dangerous. Because you don't have the power of God.

You have the power of your flesh. And you're a wimp compared to him. The more, however, you discern and you see spiritual issues, the more you realize you don't wrestle against flesh and blood.

You wrestle against the principalities and power. And you learn how to wrestle. And you learn how through the blood of Christ to defeat them.

And you are dangerous against him. So what do you do about Satan? Well, you better put on... Yeah. So what do you do? I don't know about you.

But I read through Ephesians 6 and put it on every morning. One by one. You put it on.

Then you deal with some other issues. And next, I don't have time to go through all that. You thank the Lord.

This is an important issue. You thank. I put out both hands.

And I think of 10 things since yesterday I must thank him for. And I do not stop until I have all 10 fingers done. You know what that does? It makes you a thankful person.

It's one of the results of walking with God is that you're filled with thanksgiving. So begin to meditate on things that you are thankful for. The next two issues are issues of prayer requests.

And this has helped in my life tremendously. I have two kinds of prayer requests. One, the kind of prayer requests that you'll know when they're answered.

They have a specific to them. The other kind is the kind that you do not know when they're answered. And you want them to be true about you and your loved ones forever.

There's no putting a period at the end of those. So, for instance, what I do on these is I put the date that I started praying it. The prayer request, the date that it got answered, and the answer.

And as you can see, the more you pray through this, the more you're writing new things in it about that as you pray. And when you pray through these things, one by one by one by one, the Lord will put his finger on pray more about that one today, and you will. And when you're done praying those, you say, what else do I wish came true? This is a big help here.

Lord, what else do I wish came true? Then every single one of those, you write in your prayer journal as a prayer request. And therefore, you're not trying to discipline yourself saying, I know how to be praying. You want those things to become true.

So, for instance, major pressing needs as of January 1 last year. So these are a year old. These, these, these, these.

Then I ran out, started in the back. These, these, these, these, these, these, these, these, these. Since I came here, I've written this whole page because of a lot's going on.

This is wonderful. Because every morning I come and say what's concerning me that I wish God would do. And I have many people in here, many things about me, things all about our kids and our in-laws.

They're all in here. And every time something happens, I met a man last weekend here. The man who took me to that meeting I told you about.

Well, I didn't tell you, but he came in my room and we dealt with a big issue in his life. And he wants to break through a major area. I told him I'd pray for him.

Here's his name. There's what he wants. Every day for 90 days.

Because that's the challenge. He's going to call me on the 91st day. And if he doesn't, I'll call him.

Now, what does that do? That gives you things to pray about that you really care about. And it brings to memory all the things of the year that are important to you. Now, how this is so exciting is you start getting answers.

And as you get an answer, I circle it, put yes or no in the date. So this started in July. Yes, yes, no, yes, no, yes, yes, yes, yes.

Yes, no, yes, no, yes, no, yes, yes. Yes, no, no, no. Small yes.

No, yes, yes, no, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. Do I believe in prayer? No. Is it hard to pray? No.

No. It's easy to pray. In fact, you're irritated, you're running out of time.

That's the truth. Now, the other kind of prayer requests are what I call regular prayer requests. They have to do with lifelong prayer requests.

Break my heart for the needs of the world as you see and feel them. That's never over. Fix my eyes on Jesus Christ and him alone at the end of my race.

Cast out, cast off, and protect me and my family from all demonic influence. Forgive, cleanse, and destroy all carnality and works of the flesh. Enable me to hate my sin and love holiness.

Renew my mind to discern wisdom and then choose to obey you immediately without compromise or delay. Lead me to more fully believe and receive your loyal and unconditional love from me. Lead me not into temptation for your name's sake.

And it goes on and on and on. So you begin to write down as the months go by and you're in the word, you'll see truths in the word that you'll say, whoa, I'd love that to be true about me, and you write it down. So as the months go by, you add more and more things to your list that you want to be true about you.

So if you read the last of these, guess what? Lead me never to grieve, this is for you. Lead me to be filled with the spirit, quench the spirit, know his walk by spirit, and to be finally filled with the spirit. That's what I'm meditating on all the time.

So you pray for the specifics and you see all the answers to prayer. By that time you are moving in your prayers. You come over, talk about the things that are yours, and I guarantee you, you will be frustrated that you run out of time.

You will no longer be difficult to pray. Those are the disciplines that you must be practicing, it appears to me. The journaling isn't taught in Scripture, so that's an obvious discretionary item.

Reading the Scriptures and praying are not optional. They are issues which you must practice to walk with Him. I've been carrying this for years.

It's by one of the men in history I respect the most, D.L. Moody. May this be your heart's desire. The world has yet to see what God will do with and for and through and in and by the person who is fully and wholly consecrated to Him.

I will try my utmost to be that man. I believe this is still true. I believe it is an option for all of us.

It's my encouragement to you that you would realize that there is more and to not stop seeking. It's been a spiritual pleasure to be with you. The Lord has caused growth in my life as a result of being with you.

And I came here not to preach a series of sermons, which would have been real easy for me, but instead to spiritually encourage you to find out what God has for you. It's my prayer that your life will never be the same. That this will be one of those spots in your life that you'll say, this was a turning point and I've never gone back.

Therefore, my friends, be ye filled with the Spirit. Quench not, grieve not, walk in commune with. Be filled with the Spirit.

Amen.

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