

# Fighting for a Life in the Spirit

by Steve Gallagher

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**Scripture:** Galatians 5:16, Galatians 5:22, Isaiah 26:3, John 15:4, Romans 8:5, Galatians 6:7

**Topics:** "Living in the Spirit", "Spiritual Warfare"

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## Description

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## Transcript

What you feel in here is the atmosphere of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman and he will not force himself upon anyone. The place where Kathy was referring to that that occurred at was the Faith Homes.

In the early 90s, Kathy and I would go up there for a couple weeks at a time to do nothing but seek the face of God. There was nothing there to please your flesh. No television.

Of course, we didn't have cell phones and internet. Well, maybe there was internet, but it was a dial-up or something. Anyway, it wasn't there.

There was nothing to feed your flesh and please your carnal nature. But if you wanted God, and if you were willing to fight through on your knees to have him, he was there powerfully. And that atmosphere, because Kathy and I and others who worked here at the time would spend hours and hours fighting through to have God's presence here.

And the Lord, I don't know how you call it, how you say it or whatever, but whatever was there came here. And God's presence is here. I always marveled because their meetings were no bigger than what we have here.

I marveled at that. This is just a half-hour drive north of Chicago. I marveled that there weren't crowds of people in that place.

I know if I didn't have Pure Life Ministries, I would have left my career, whatever, and moved there just so I could be in those meetings. I just could never comprehend why no one else had a hunger for God's presence like that. Well, it just so happens that the title of my message today is, Fighting for a Life in the Spirit.

We're going to be in the book of Galatians, and this is going to be sort of a teaching message. Many of you have had breakthroughs over the last month with Glenn Meldrum's preaching. His preaching has a way of either making you fall on your face and cry out for mercy or just hating.

There doesn't seem to be much in between. So you've had a breakthrough, now what? Now you must learn to fight. And men, I want you to hear me.

If you plan on ending up in the right place, you will spend the rest of your life fighting. Christianity is not for wimps. Whoever came up with that is clueless about what real Christianity is.

Real Christianity is for people who are willing to fight. And it's not that we have to fight to earn our salvation. Don't misunderstand what I'm saying.

And we don't fight in our own strength. We fight in the strength of the Lord. But there's got to be something in us that desires God.

And because we're on a planet that is dark and in rebellion to God's authority, and because there is a demonic spirit kingdom set up on this planet, and because most of all, and this is what I'm going to be talking about today, because we have a fallen nature, a flesh that desires the things of this world and does not desire the things of God, by virtue of those things we have to fight. There is no other way. There is no bed of roses to take you from here to heaven.

If you plan on ending up there, I'm telling you, you're going to have to learn to be a fighter. Something you haven't been in the past, or haven't been much of one anyway. All right, so let's just talk a little bit about the flesh for a second before we get into the word.

The pulpit commentary says, the flesh represents the whole system of corrupt nature. As it breaks forth into the 17 different forms of transgression found in Galatians 5, 19 to 21. And more than that, you know, because as Paul says right there at the end of that, those verses he says, and things like this.

I mean, those 17 types of sin that are mentioned there are really just a representative of an entire system of evil. I mean, there's no end to it. Scripture has nothing good to say about the flesh.

John 6 says, the flesh profits nothing. Romans 7, in the flesh there is no good thing. Romans 13, you are to make no provision for the flesh.

And Philippians 3, a Christian is to put no confidence in the flesh. The flesh cannot be changed, it cannot be reformed, it cannot be improved, it cannot be reconciled to God. You cannot please God in the flesh.

The flesh reminds me of a spoiled kid who demands that he gets everything he wants and throws a fit if he doesn't get it. That's what the flesh is like. That's what my flesh is like anyway.

I don't know what yours is like, but mine's really bad. And you know, it promises you or makes you feel like if you'll just give it what it's asking for, then you'll be happy. But it's a lie.

It's not true. The more you give it, the more miserable you are. And you know, should you desire to be a Christian, should you desire to end up in heaven with the Lord, you know, the flesh isn't going to be happy about that.

It doesn't want any hindrances to getting what it wants. But if you're going to set yourself on that course, then what the flesh is going to tell you is, all right, but you're going to do it on my terms. And my terms means that we're just going to keep a few outward rules and go to church on Sunday.

That's the way we're going to do this thing. And I suspect that pretty much sums up the way all of you guys lived your lives before you came here. That's the way it was for me.

So the book of Galatians is all about Paul trying to reach these people who had been poisoned by the Judaizers. The whole deal of the Judaizers was to teach them rule keeping. You know, here's all these rules and these laws and stuff.

If you just keep all this stuff, then God will be pleased with you. And Paul was just flabbergasted and shocked and distraught that the churches he had labored to form there in that region of Turkey had gone into this kind of, what, religion, whatever. So the first four and a half chapters of Galatians are basically an argument.

Paul is making a case against what the Judaizers had been telling them. And I'll just sum it up this way. This is what he's saying to them.

Listen, obeying outward laws is not what Christianity is all about. That's dead religion. That isn't it.

Let me tell you what it is. It is to fight for and to have a life in the spirit. That's what it means to be a Christian and to live in his love.

If you live in his love, you're going to fulfill all the laws of the Old Testament. It's not about rule keeping, it's about relationship. You know, in the Galatians, they were guilty of really pretty much exactly what is out there in the church world in America today, for the most part, is just this kind of outward Christianity where you keep a few rules, go to church on Sunday, and get on with your life, living it pretty much the way you want to live it.

It's trying to please God in the flesh, which Paul says is impossible. All right, so let's go over some of these verses. I'm going to read some of the good part of the second half of Galatians 5 and a couple of verses in 6. Mainly, I'm focused on what Paul's saying about this battle between the flesh life and the spiritual life.

Let's start with verse 13. It's really a transitional statement. He's been arguing all this time, and now he starts to transition into the practical.

So let's read this here. For you were called to freedom, brethren. Only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. But I say, here it is, this tremendous conditional promise, walk by the spirit, or walk in the spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

And then the battle. For the flesh sets its desire against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the spirit, you're not under the law.

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are, you know, every time Paul comes up with a list of sin, it always starts off with sexual sin. Immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. And men, I want you to hear me.

If you have some doctrinal system that has taught you something other than that, then it's false. You cannot live in sin and imagine yourself to end up in heaven. It ain't gonna happen.

Okay? It just is not gonna happen. So you're either gonna live the Christian life, or you're not gonna end up with God. I'm sorry that that doesn't line up with how you want it to be, but that is what the Word of God teaches.

Anyway, verse 22, here's another one of those tremendous buts, you know, like Ephesians 2, but God, but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such things, there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. And then skip over to the next chapter, verse 7. Do not be deceived. God is not mocked.

For whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption. But the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

All right. Praise the Lord. Wonderful words of life.

Truthful words of life. Paul is basically saying, listen, the way to walk with the Lord isn't to try to keep every jot and tittle of the law. It is to live your life in the Spirit.

You know, if the Spirit is indwelling you, you will find that there is a hunger to know God. There is a motivation inside of you to obey Him. And you will find that there is an energy that's not of yourself, an energy to want to pursue the Lord, to seek the Lord.

You will find that there's power to obey God and to say no to temptations. F. B. Meyer said, the reason why so many are overcome by passion is because they refuse to live on the spiritual level with God. The connection between themselves and the divine Spirit thus becomes choked or cut.

You know, and that is just the truth. Guys, I'm telling you, you are going to live the rest of your life with an atmosphere like you feel right now. Would that be okay with you if you had that atmosphere inside of you the rest of your life? To where you go into Walmart and you have an atmosphere inside of you that you don't have to run to church, you know, and try to get pumped up to hold you through the week? That there's something inside of you that's taking you through? Wouldn't that be okay? You can have that.

It's there for you. Praise the Lord. All right, so how do we live in the Spirit? And, you know, this really isn't kind of the body of my message, but I'll just take a couple of minutes to share some practical things.

It really is what Paul says in chapter 6. It's sowing to the Spirit. It's doing spiritual things. That is how you allow the Holy Spirit to have His way in your life.

Spending time in worship. Being in good fellowship, you know, when you're talking about the things of God with friends or reading the biographies of godly men. Doing deeds of mercy or being kind to other people.

Listening to godly sermons or reading godly books. Those are all the kinds of things that will feed your spiritual life. And every time you do those sorts of things, it creates momentum and pushes you in a direction.

It is a direction away from the world system, away from carnal living, away from hell itself, and towards the kingdom of God. So those things are all important, but the most important by far is to have a solid devotional life. That is the most important thing you could do in your life to maintain a spiritual lifestyle.

This is what the Galatians had lost sight of, apparently, was the importance of relationship with God. And you know, anytime people get away, Christians get away from walking with the Lord, walking in the Spirit, however you want to put it, they always revert back to rule keeping and dead religion. It always happens that way.

Well, usually it happens that way. I guess some people just totally backslide, but that's typically what happens. They just keep going to church, keep doing the outward things, but inwardly they're dead.

There's no life of God going on inside them, no connection with the Lord. The biggest problem that people have with establishing a good devotional life is they never get in the habit of it. You know, God has given us this wonderful gift of human beings are just easily habituated.

We are. We just get in the habits, all kinds of habits. And that can be a powerful tool in your life.

Really, it can be if you learn to utilize it. You know, well, I've said it before that God laid it on our hearts, I think it was in late 84, 1984. Did you know that there actually was life on earth back then? There was.

And the Lord got it into our hearts to start having morning time with Him. And man, it was excruciating at first. Golly, it felt like 10 hours to spend 10 minutes.

It was hard. And I knew the Lord was telling us to do it. And, you know, she felt it too.

And we just had to fight through, but it was hard at first. And it got easier and easier and easier. And you know what happens if you do it the right way pretty soon.

It just becomes part of your morning routine. You know, you get up, you have your coffee, you take a shower, you eat breakfast, you go to work, all those things. Well, if you're doing, if you're a believer, then you have a time with God in there as well.

And it just becomes a part of the pattern of your morning life. Why is it that when there's a shortage of time, that the first thing that goes is your life with God? Be better to not take a shower. Trust me, it would be better, even for people that got to be around you, especially for people that got to be around you.

I would rather smell you than to deal with your flesh. I was talking to a woman here a week or two ago, and I was talking to her about the importance of having a time. Well, actually, no, I asked her.

First, I asked her, you know, about her prayer life. And she basically said, well, I pray when I feel like it. And I'm, you know, I'm just kind of the busy type.

I'm a Martha, and I run around and I do stuff. I can't sit down and pray, or I can't focus on, you know, I just can't do that. So she basically is saying that she prays when she feels like it.

That is dangerous. Because when you need to be connected to God is when you least feel like praying. That's when you need him the most.

But beyond that, I mean, it's really just a cop out anyway. But beyond that is you never develop the habit of prayer. Let me put it to you this way.

How many of you have quit smoking? Okay, the rest of you keep trying, you'll eventually get there. I was wondering what all these cigarette butts are doing around the property. It's kind of like smoking, you know, except reverse.

You're trying to establish a habit instead of breaking a habit. But I told this lady, I said, listen, you know, because you never establish the habit of prayer, you're like a guy who quit smoking and goes through the grueling two or three days, you know, agitation and all the stuff you go through. And then you take a few puffs off a cigarette.

And so then you go through those grueling three days again and then smoke another cigarette. You never get past it. The pain of it.

You know, if you'll just quit for a couple of weeks, you'll start to get past the hold the nicotine has had on you and all that. And it's the same with prayer. If you are just kind of all over the place, you pray when you want to pray or well, this morning I'm going to pray at six and well, tomorrow, yeah, I didn't get up on time, so I'll do it at nighttime tomorrow or I'll do it on my lunch break because, you know, I kind of stayed out late the night before.

You never establish a habit. You're just making it impossible for yourself. What you want is for your prayer life to become second nature to you.

And it has been to me for 32 years. And nothing stops me. I was out there praying in the rain this morning at whatever time it was, four o'clock.

I'm usually out there at four o'clock every morning. And wherever I'm at in the country, snow, rain, gangs roaming around, you know, I've been in some dangerous places. I just was down in Brazil.

Nothing is going to stop me from my time with God. Do you have that conviction? You better get it. I was in Atlanta one time.

I don't know if I've told this story here before. We were down visiting Adam Gardner. If you know him, he's a board member and he's a homicide investigator in Atlanta and one of my best friends.

So we were down there visiting him and I went out on my prayer walk in the morning. And he was, they lived downtown at that time. And so I went out on the streets and I ended up going down a street I shouldn't have went down.

And so I'm walking along talking to the Lord. And I noticed down the street a ways was a gang of guys. Now, if I wasn't so prideful, I would have turned around and went back the other way.

I've never been one to run. So I just said, whatever, I'm here with the Lord. And I just kept going.

I was on the left side of the street and they were on the right. And they look at me and they said, look at this guy. This is just too good to be true, you know? And so I'm walking along and they crossed the street and they gathered around me as I'm walking and praying.

And you want to know what happened next? I am here. So I'm walking and the leader comes up, gets in front of me. And he says, what you looking for, man? And I said, I'm a minister and I'm out here looking for God.

You want to talk about it for a while? And they just... God walks with me, I'm telling you. Takes care of me. It wouldn't have mattered, you know, even if they were to beat me into the ground or whatever, I would have been out on those streets the next morning.

And it's not because I'm something great. I'll tell you why. You want to know the secret? It's because I know what I'm like in the flesh and I have come to hate it.

I came to hate it many years ago. I don't want to be in the flesh. I can't afford to be in the flesh because my flesh is nasty and I don't want to be in the flesh.

All right, so let's just take a look at some of the benefits. I'll say it that way. I don't know how else to say it.

Why you fight for this life in the spirit. Number one, you must fight for your life in the spirit so you will not fulfill the demands of the flesh. And we see it right there in the 16th verse, this wonderful conditional promise that if you do something, God is making you a promise.

We just sang that song, right? Do you really believe the promises of God? Well, here is a promise you can hang your life on. If you will walk in the spirit, if you will sow to the spirit, if you will fight to have a life in the spirit, then you will not fulfill. The word fulfill is teleos, which is, it really just means to mature into something or to complete something.

You will not fulfill, you won't carry through the act of sin. That is a tremendous promise for guys like you and me, right? You know, the lust for sin is demanding. It's like that brat that just demands, demands, demands, and no matter how many toys you give it, he's never satisfied.

And that's what the flesh is like. You cannot appease it or satisfy it. It is always going to want more.

You can sum it up with two words, I want, and those two words represent a passion that is powerful and controlling, controlled your life, right? I want, right? I want, I must have it. I demand it. That's the language of human lust.

And you know, it's not, Paul's not limiting this to sexual sin. This is the lust for any kind of sin, gossiping or giving over to anger or resentment or bitterness or drugs or drinking or gambling, whatever, any kind of sin. It's that desire inside you to do what God tells you not to do.

So he doesn't say that the desire won't be there. It is there because you have a fallen nature inside you. What he's saying is you will win the battles.

You will get the victory over that desire. Praise the Lord. And number two, you must fight for your life in the Spirit so you will not reap corruption.

And we'll go to chapter six for this one, verse seven. The one who sows to his own flesh, it's another conditional promise. If you sow to your flesh, you will from the flesh reap corruption.

The picture here, I was thinking about this the other day, and it just kind of formed in my mind a picture of what Paul was saying here. You know, and you think about the farmers out there sowing seed and stuff. The picture is one of purposeful activity.

You're planting seeds of corrupt influence in the soil of your heart. Every time you give over to some carnal passion, some desire of the flesh or whatever, you are taking a seed of something that is corrupt, and you're putting it right into your heart, the most precious thing you have. The word in the Greek is phethora, and you know, depending on your translation, it could be translated here and other places as corruption or destruction or even death.

That's what the word phethora means in the Greek. So, you know, they have one word that captures a sense about it. Let me give you my definition of it.

The process of continuous decay that causes spiritual life to ebb away. That's phethora. You know, in the secular world, it's used to describe the rotting of an organism or the decaying of food.

But in the spiritual sense, it's the rotting of your character and the loss of spiritual life. In his second epistle, Peter talked about those who are slaves of phethora. Slaves of phethora.

That's what you were. That's what I was. He said they're like dogs that lick up their vomit and like pigs that go back and wallow in their own filth.

Those are apt descriptions of the kind of life that I lived at one time. And you know, this is a spiritual law that can't be evaded. You can call yourself Christian.

You can go to church on Sunday. That's fine. It's good.

But if you are sowing to the flesh on a regular basis, you are only reaping corruption and spiritual death upon your own life. So Paul says the answer is to build up your life in the spirit. The answer isn't to try to obey a bunch of minute Hebraic rules or whatever.

The answer is to build up your life in the spirit. And that brings us to the next point. You must fight for your life in the spirit so you will reap life.

And it's the next verse. The one who sows to the spirit will from the spirit reap life. Did I miss a word there? David caught it.

What was it? Eternal. I left it out on purpose. Let me explain why.

I'm not trying to rewrite the Bible, but I want to explain. We all have this tendency. I think it's true.

I do. When we hear the words eternal life, we immediately think in terms of salvation and everlasting time in heaven. That's what we think of, eternal life.



But we're missing the most important part of that. I took eternal out because I want you to understand the bigger issue is the quality of life, not the duration of it. That was good, wasn't it? I was pretty happy with it.

This word life is zoe in the Greek. I'm going to read a little passage out of my book, *The Time of Your Life in Light of Eternity*. It's referring to this verse.

When Paul promises us that if a person sows to the spirit, he will reap the harvest of everlasting life by that spirit. He is saying that every effort to pursue the things of God will reap a harvest of the spiritual vitality that comes from the very being of God. In other words, the believer can tap into the same kind of vitality that will one day be his in heaven.

In short, Zoe describes the energizing, invigorating force that empowers a dead soul with the very life of God. This explains why Jesus was called the Prince of Zoe, the ruler of Zoe, you could say, I guess. He also made the following statements about himself.

I am the way, the truth, and the life of God. I am the resurrection and the Zoe, the life of God. I am the bread of Zoe.

He also said the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have Zoe, the life of God, and to have it more abundantly. Who doesn't want that? But are you willing to fight for it? Or does God have to hand it to you on a silver platter? You know what Sister Kathy shared with you earlier about when we went to the faith homes and she opened up that hymnal.

Do you know why God had her open to that very song? It was because what she said, that she had a cry in her heart, God, I must have you. I must have you in a real way. That had been going on in her heart probably for years, at least for months.

And like a dam, you know, that the water is building up and building up and the pressure is building and building and building. And then one day, all of a sudden, that dam breaks and it comes flooding in on your soul. That's what will happen if you have that cry in your heart.

All right, number four, you must fight to have a life in the spirit so you will produce fruit. And we see in verses 22 and 23, these nine characteristics. And you know, the picture here is of a tree and the tree is producing fruit.

And you know, for the orchard keeper, is there like a name for a guy that does that stuff? I don't know what it is. The orchard guy. The orchard guy, if he wants to have fruit, then there's some things he's got to do.

He's got to, first of all, start with planting a fruit tree, not a scrub oak or something else. It's got to be a fruit tree, right? You know, if you, I mean, I just took a quick look. Really, I didn't spend a lot of time with it, but there's over 25 passages in the gospels where Jesus is talking about fruit.

It was a big thing in his thinking. It was an absolute, see, I don't want to say it in the wrong way, but, and it was a part of the spiritual life that he was bringing onto earth. That if you have this life of God in you, you can't help but to grow fruit.

That one part, it should terrify every one of you men. There's a parable, I think it's in Luke 13, where he talks about coming to the, he's the owner of an orchard. He comes to the orchard, and there's this one tree that's been sitting there for three years.

Three years he's come, every year he's found no fruit on it, and he's ready to just tear it down, cut it down. And the guy who's keeping the trees says, Master, just give me one more year, and I will dig around it. I'll put, you know, whatever they put in the ground, fertilizer.

I'll, you know, I'll do all this stuff. I will really, I want this tree to have a chance, and he says, I'm going to give it one more year, one more season. And you know, guys, I don't like threatening, but I do want it to be in your mind that we're talking serious stuff.

I have seen people leave this program and other programs like this, where God has brought them in for that final season, and in their hearts, oh yeah, outwardly they're going through all the motions, doing all the right things, saying all the right things, but in their hearts they have shut their heart off to God, and they've left here and were killed. Yeah, a number, a number of guys have left here and died in their sin. It should terrify us.

It really should, when you think about the ramifications of that. But that's not really what I want to think about. I want to think about you guys responding to what the Lord's offering you.

So, you know, you've got to plant the right type of tree, but also that tree's got to receive nourishment. You know, you don't find a fruit tree out in the middle of the desert. It just doesn't work that way.

It's got to have water. It's got to have that kind of life. Jesus said, I am the vine, you are the branches.

If you truly are connected to him, he who abides in me and I in him, he bears much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. And even there, in that passage, there's a threat.

If you're not bearing fruit, you're taken out and burned up. And that's what Jesus said. I'm sorry it doesn't fit in with the grace narrative of our day, but that is what Jesus said.

But also this is true. It takes time to produce fruit. You know, you don't go looking for a ripe apple in May.

And this is one of the struggles you guys, some of you anyway, have had. That, you know, you want this full spiritual life right now, today. Okay, I repented.

I want to have all the nine fruits of the Spirit, you know, fully evident and manifest in my life. Well, I'm sorry, but it doesn't happen that way. You've got to fight for it, and it takes time.

It takes time. It doesn't happen overnight. And guys get discouraged, you know, because they don't feel that wonderful life.

You know, you see someone who has the life of God in them. Take Glenn Meldrum. You see the life of God in him.

Well, I can tell you, I've known Glenn for 20 years. He wasn't like that 20 years ago. And I wasn't like I am 20 years ago.

Right. You never argue with your wife because you'll always come out losing end. All right, so what are these fruit? Let me just go through them real quick.

Starts off with love. And isn't that just right? I mean, God is agape. That is the essence of this being.

I mean, you know, when I think about that, and Lord, I don't mean to be disrespectful or something or misapply anything, but I just, when I think of that, this being of love, I think of like a cloud, just of power, emanating power. And it is this cloud, and the power in it is this thing that's called agape. It is so beyond any kind of affection that human flesh can come up with that it pulls apart.

You can't even compare the two. It is a powerful passion that is the being of God. And when you have the Holy Spirit indwelling you and filling you, and you are living in the life of the Holy Spirit, that love comes through.

But, you know, that's okay at the end of however many years that the Lord is able to conquer you inside and overcome your flesh and so on. I'll say something about that in a minute. But even now, in these early days for you guys, many of you have had the breakthrough you needed, and you're already starting now down this path of sanctification.

But even now, in these early days, the way it works is you extend yourself and God fills you as you do that. He doesn't just overrule your will. You have a will.

You've got to desire to live a Christian life. But you don't do it in your own strength. So you just put forth an effort and the Lord fills it with Himself.

It's such a beautiful thing. And He's so willing. He desires to live out His love through you to other people.

Now I'm going to give you just a tiny, teensy, little example of what I'm talking about. It happened a week ago right here in the chapel. I was sitting up here like I do and praying and doing whatever spiritual things Pastor Steve does up here.

And I just noticed two guys walk in, one after another. And I guess, are those sheets of paper you get for taking notes? Is that what it is? So the first guy didn't grab a sheet, and the second guy right behind him grabbed a sheet. And then he thought, I'm going to grab one for him too.

And so he grabbed two. And the one guy sat down right over here, and the other guy following him handed him a sheet. And he, oh yeah, thanks.

I didn't think of whatever he thought. And then that guy went and sat down. Now you know who you are in here.

And it's just a nothing, tiny, little act of kindness. You know? It's just being considerate. It's not a huge thing.

It's not some monumental thing. It was just a little deed of kindness. But what would your life be like if it was made up of thousands of those kinds of things? If, you know, when you went into the store, it was in your mind.

You know, if I get the opportunity to do some little deed of kindness, I'm going to do it. You know? And you just are thinking that way. And you have radar.

You have antenna looking for opportunities. I do. You know, when I go in stores, I'm always just kind of aware if I see some older lady struggling with a thing of water or something.

I'm always like, I want to see it, and I want to run over and help them. And I've kind of got myself in a couple of messes doing that stuff. But I just want to have that because it is so far removed from who I am as a person.

I'm not like that. But God is. And I want to give him every opportunity to live out his life through me.

Joy. The joy that comes from the Holy Spirit produces a deep sense of contentment, fulfillment, and happiness that is not dependent upon favorable circumstances. You know, the best the world has to offer are these short little stints of happiness, like going to a bar on Friday night.

Everyone's getting drunk and doing whatever they do. And then they're miserable for another week until next Friday night or whatever. That's not how it is with the Lord.

When he puts his joy in you, there's a substance that comes into your character. And it stays with you and goes through the good times and the bad times and difficult times and all of it. Such a difference between the empty joys of the world and the solid joys of the Lord.

It's fulfillment. You know, all mankind is looking for love, joy, and peace. They're all looking for those things.

But they're not going to find them in the world because the things of the world do not satisfy. Joy of the Lord fills you. I remember what it was like, I mean, barely.

It's many years ago. But when I was driven by lust, how miserable my life was, just that agitation inside, I want, I want, I want, and you can never satisfy it. And it's just driving you and driving you.

Anybody relate? It's a miserable existence. And if you can break out of that, guys, I'm telling you, as time goes on, the contentment of the Lord will fill you inside and you won't need those things. You won't need them.

That agitation will be gone and you'll just be happy. Would it be okay if you'd be happy without illicit sex? Would that be all right for you guys? It's what the Lord wants to give you. Peace.

You know, when you have a life of sin and self-will, there's going to be turmoil and consternation and confusion, all those things. But when you are in the Spirit, you'll have the peace of God. First of all, you know, well, let me just say it this way.

You will never know the peace of God until you have peace with God. You know, you can't be in rebellion to the Lord and think he's going to fill you with his Spirit. It's not going to happen.

This is something the world cannot comprehend. Jesus said, peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, not as the world gives. And Paul said, for the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life, ZOE, and peace, Irene.

And Isaiah said, you will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you because he trusts in you. You know, there's a contentment that comes with a life in God. All right, so love, joy, peace, the world's looking for all these things, but not just these things.

Patience, which is the opposite of a frantic spirit. Kindness, which is the opposite of rudeness. Goodness, which is the opposite of wickedness.

Faithfulness, which is the opposite of flakiness. Gentleness, which is the opposite of harshness, and anger, and pride. Self-control, which is the opposite of being out of control.

It's being controlled by the Lord. You know, I was thinking about this the other day, and probably most of you have heard the story of the man, and it's a true story. I don't remember exactly all the things about it, but it is a true story, that back in the days of communist Russia, there was a man who was in prison suffering terribly, would not renounce Christ, and because of that, they tortured him.

It was horrible, but eventually he made it out of prison, and eventually escaped that country, and got to the United States, the land of plenty, the land of idols, the land where your flesh can have anything it desires, and before long, this man who was so resolute in his life with God, that he would not let those men, you know, force him to renounce Christ, back slid as he started giving over to his flesh. You know, what the devil couldn't get in one way, got him in another way, and I want to have that testimony in my life, that God controlled me, and that my life is a life of discipline. All right, I'm going to wrap it up.

Fighting for a life in the spirit. You know, it's a short-term battle, and it's a long-term battle. Every day, you have the challenge before you to fight to stay in the spirit.

Today, you have that. I have that challenge today. I'll just mention in passing, because this is one of the areas where so many are taken down, is just through television and social media, the internet, all those kinds of forms of entertainment.

Guys, you have got to make a consecration before you leave this place. Don't just get home and just kind of like float along and just hope things will turn out. You better make a consecration and make some strong decisions while you're here, and I would tell you, get rid of the satellite.

Get rid of it, because you cannot trust yourself. I can't trust myself. I don't have satellite.

I don't want that in my house. You know, so we have a television set. We have a DVD player.

I have DVDs. Mostly what I watch are documentaries, but I can control what I watch and how much I watch, and you've got to figure something out like that for yourself, or you're just going to give over, and pretty soon your life in God that you have fought to establish here is just going to dwindle away. You've got to fight for this life in the spirit every day the rest of your life, but it's not just a short-term battle, but it's a long-term battle, and what I mean by that is the process of sanctification because right now the battle is difficult because you guys are just coming out of a lifetime of flesh, you know, and you're new in this thing, but what you don't understand yet that you will come to understand is it gets easier and easier and easier because what happens is it becomes a lifestyle to walk with the Lord.

It becomes a lifestyle, second nature, and it's not hard, you know, when it's just the way you do life. That's how we do life here at Pure Life Ministries. You take that life home with you.

You don't have to be here. You know, think of it as a graph, you know, one of those financial graphs where you start off down here. We all start at ground zero.

Every one of us have had to do that, and as time goes on, you have your ups and downs. You're, you know, sometimes you're doing good, sometimes not so good. Sometimes you fall.

You pick yourself up again, get right back on track, and you're going, and you're going, and but you're making steady progress. That's what happens. If you'll just keep fighting, you're going to make steady progress, and the Lord is going to take more and more and more of you and fill you with His Spirit, increasingly so, and so your worst day a year from now will be far better than your best day today, and I'm telling you, that's the truth.

The first thing Paul said in verse 16 was walk, and walk implies progress, and it implies direction. If I could look inside your inside world, where would it tell me you are headed? You're headed somewhere. Guys, you have been given, trust me, I'm not saying this because I happen to be the president of this place.

I was just a dumb fool that God chose to start this ministry, and He is the one who led the way. He's the one that created this place. I don't get the credit for it, but I'm telling you, you have the opportunity of a lifetime in this place.

You will never have another opportunity like this. You just won't. You have the opportunity of a lifetime to establish a life in God, and if you'll do that while you're here, and everything we fight for in this place, the staff, we fight to allow the Holy Spirit to have His way in this place and His atmosphere to be established here.

We fight hard for that. Believe me, we do, and if you will enter into that, when you get kicked out of the nest and you go back home, you're going to find that you have momentum that will carry you through the rest of your life. If you will stick it out and keep fighting to maintain what you've been given, that's what's going to happen.

Lord, I thank you that your life is available to all of us, and we want to say yes to you, Lord. We don't want to squander this opportunity, and we don't want to fritter it away with nonsense, with little carnal things, and I pray for these men. I pray for our visitors.

Lord, help every single person in here to establish that life in the Spirit. Show them, Lord. Let them taste and see that you are good.

Let them get a taste of what it means to walk with the Lord, to be led by the Lord. Such an awesome blessing to be led by the Lord, to have every decision I make practically has been made for me by you, Lord. You know always what's best.

I don't have to worry about am I making a right decision or not because you're leading me. I'm walking in your Spirit, and you're making plain to me which way to go. Such a blessing, this life in the Spirit you've made available to us.

Thank you for it, Lord. There are no words to thank you enough for what you have given us. I pray for every person in here that you will make this real to them, and you will get it into their hearts.

I have got to have this life that Pastor Steve is talking about. I dare not go another day in the flesh. I am going to start cutting things out of my life.

I am going to establish a time with God in the morning, no matter what it costs me. Please, Lord, get that determination inside people's hearts. In Jesus' name, I pray.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/HPng4emadPI.mp4>

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