

Walking by the Spirit Summarized

If [because] we live by [in] the Spirit, let us also walk by [in] the Spirit. (Galatians 5:25)

By nature we live according to the flesh—we sin. At the moment of salvation—when we believe the gospel of salvation that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised from the dead—God changes us from being dead in sin to being alive in Christ (Ephesians 2:1-7). He makes us spiritually alive in the Spirit (we live by the Spirit), and we inherit the new nature of Christ (Romans 8:9-14). However, our salvation does not remove or replace our sin nature; we will have it until we die or are caught up to meet our Lord at the rapture. Consequently, our completely opposite natures—our old sin nature and our new nature in Christ—are in constant battle within us (Romans 7:14 – 8:4).

Although we will continue to sin, it is God's desire for those who believe that Christ died for us (His children) that we stop living according to sin and, instead, live according to our new nature—He wants us to walk by His Spirit (Romans 6:1-14; Galatians 5:16). Evidence of the Spirit's work through us are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The first outward expression of the fruit of the Spirit is *love*. In the absence of love—derived from the love of God and our Lord Jesus Christ—we are unable to exhibit the other aspects of the fruit. The last is *self-control*; that is, we must evaluate and make decisions regarding our words and actions so that we live according to the Spirit and not according to our sin nature. If our decisions are based on love, then joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and gentleness should automatically follow. Brethren, this requires a conscious effort on our part. Is the fruit of the Spirit evident through our words and actions?

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against any one; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ [God] rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness [grace] in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (Colossians 3:12-17)