

A new way of life by the power of the Spirit Learning to walk all over again!



“As a prisoner of the Lord, then, I urge you walk in a way worthy of the calling you have received.”

Ephesians 4:1

“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”

Galatians 5:16

“And we pray this in order that you may walk worthy of the Lord and may please him in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God...”

Colossians 1:10

Our Walk = Our life-style in daily affairs.

In this lesson we learn about the dynamics of personal change by the power of the Spirit

- ***Part #1: True change is impossible by human effort***

Here we attempt to prevent a legalistic, will-power approach to personal change.

- ***Part #2: The Spirit – Flesh Struggle.***

We explain that sin stems from our essentially sinful human nature, and thus, change must come through the empowering work of the Spirit in the life of the believer.

- ***Part #3: Renouncing the old man and embracing the new.***

We close with a prophetic exercise in which we renounce the sinful qualities of our old way of life and prophetically visualize ourselves as controlled by the Spirit in these particular areas.

Basic Texts about Personal Change:

(Read through these chapters quickly as a basis for this lesson)

- **Romans 6,7 and 8**
- **Galatians 5**
- **Ephesians 4 and 5**
- **Colossians 2 and 3**



Part #1 – Change is not easy!

True sanctification does not happen through human efforts

Ever try to kick a tough habit?

- Quitting smoking
- Losing weight
- “Keeping your cool” and holding your tongue when frustrated or angry
- Resisting the blues during the winter months
- Stopping gossip and criticism
- Planning ahead rather than procrastinating
- Budgeting money



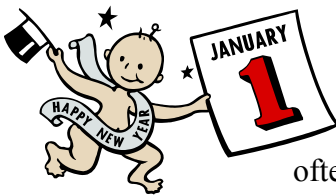
Exercise: Share an example in your own life of a futile attempt to change by your own will-power.

Growing in holiness - like learning to walk all over again!

Learning new habits is like being a child, learning to walk for the first time. How often does that determined toddler start out with cackles of excitement, only to fall flat on his or her little face! Likewise in the Christian life! We are called to “*Walk as Jesus did.*” (1 John 2:4). Our walk – that is to say, our lifestyle – ought to reflect the values and character of Jesus himself. But how difficult it is to learn to walk all over again! Throughout a lifetime we have developed deeply ingrained sinful patterns of thought and behavior, and these habits do not die easily. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that we begin with the understanding and expectation *that it is impossible to walk like Jesus in our own strength!* We need “Daddy’s” help – (and lots of band-aids for when we scrape our knees!) We need the Spirit’s power within us to produce the change we desire.



New Years’ Resolutions



It’s January 1 – the beginning of the New Year - and resolutions abound: losing 10 pounds... eating more vegetables... calling Mom more often...etc. etc. We start strong of course, but after a month or so, we find ourselves back where we began; more lazy and fat than ever! Take heart, friend! You are not alone. None of us can change by his or her own efforts – by the force of our will – or by simply trying harder. We come up short every time.



Romans 7:14-25 -- Paul's struggle – all too familiar

The Apostle Paul shares his own flesh-and-blood struggle to break sinful patterns in his life. The more he tried, the more mired he became in sin. As we read these words, can we identify in any way?

What is Paul's conclusion? (v.21) Why is it impossible for him to “kick the habit” of sin?

Galatians 3:1-5 -- Galatians try to finish the work of the Spirit by their own efforts



After accepting Christ, the Christians in Galatia set about to implement and observe the Old Testament ceremonial law – circumcision, dietary rules...etc. They hoped to perfect personal holiness by observing these laws. Predictably, their experiment failed miserably! The Apostle Paul warns them in the strongest terms that this attempt at self-made righteousness can cost them their souls!

According to Paul (clearly angry), why are the Galatians behaving foolishly?

Legalism simply does not work!

How we love rules. They give us something to do which is specific and under our control. However, true Christian change must be *spiritual* in nature. Our little rules simply do not work because they leave the core illness of sin untouched – the fallen nature that controls us.

Imagine a child, hungry before dinner. Mother warns: “*Whatever you do, don't even think about opening up that cookie jar!*” Can we confidently predict the scene that follows? Likewise with our little rules – They have a way of backfiring.

Don't touch! – Colossians 2:20-23



“Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: ‘Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!’? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.”



According to this text, how does Paul describe the false wisdom in these rules?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Why do these rules not help in “restraining sensual indulgence?”

_____.

Part #2: The Flesh-Spirit struggle: Breaking the Slavery

“Flesh” = Sinful Human Nature (Not the human body)



The Monkey on Your Back – The Flesh

Imagine you had a little monkey as a pet. This little creature likes nothing more than to cuddle up on your shoulder and keep you company through the events of your day. Such a cute and playful monkey; how can you resist when he asks for a banana? He smiles sweetly. You feed him again. As the days go by, one banana becomes two, then three...etc. The little monkey begins to

grow.



Eventually, after weeks of feeding, your little pet requests a banana once again, as he is now in the habit of doing. Yet the voice seems to have changed. No longer sweet and cute, a hoarse, rasping, demanding voice barks: “*Gimmie Banana!*” A bit unnerved, you try to put him off. “*I...I don’t think we’ll have any bananas today, myer... little monkey.*” The muscular arms tighten their grip around your neck with asphyxiating persuasion, and the now sinister voice demands: “*Gimmie banana – now!*” That panicky feeling of being unable to breathe begins to send a chill down your spine and you feel the oppressive weight of what was before such a cute little pet. The tables seem to have turned and you wonder “*now who is the pet, and who is the owner?*” Who is truly calling the shots? Through much feeding, you have now become a type of slave to the cravings of the “monkey.”

Such is the process of our sinful human nature – our flesh. We feed the many little pet sins, as if they were harmless. But as our flesh grows and grows, it demands more and more. We sin more frequently and intensely, and still feel a craving for more. Sin comes to control our lives and we are enslaved. Our flesh is the monkey on our back -- now grown into a gorilla.



Romans 6:1-14 – The Flesh must be crucified

According to the text, what does baptism symbolize? (v.3-5) _____.

What is our part? What must we do to keep sin from continuing to reign in our mortal bodies?

_____.

And what is the promise that inspires us to live “according to the Spirit?” (v.14)

_____.

Walking like Jesus means walking according to the Spirit and not the Flesh

Walking in the Spirit – Following the impulses and directives of the Spirit

After accepting Jesus as Lord, we have two forces dwelling within – *the Flesh and the Spirit*. If we follow the guidance of the Spirit, more and more we will deny the impulses of the flesh. In order to do this, however, we must *feed the Holy Spirit and starve the flesh* within us. As a spiritual baby, we learn to walk all over again, but now the Spirit teaches us! *Do we trust our “Daddy” enough to walk with him, rather than in our own way?*



***Saying “yes” to the Spirit trumps saying “no” to sin!
Which will it be – pop-corn now.... Or prime rib later?!***

It is much easier to say “no” to a temptation when we know that God offers something much better in its place. Satan tempts us to satisfy our hunger with pop-corn, while God offers the true “Prime Rib” of Spirit-birthed holiness! Satan tempted Jesus to change a stone to bread in order to satisfy his physical hunger. Jesus was able to resist, knowing that “*man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*”



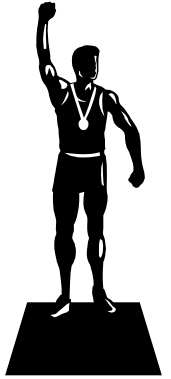
We can choose to follow the lead of the Spirit...

- Knowing that God loves us and desires our happiness...
- Knowing that blessing and joy comes with serving God
- Knowing God will help us in the process...



Romans 8:1-17 – Portrait of a Victorious Life!

What promise awaits us, if we walk according to the spirit and not according to the desires of the flesh? (v.1)



What are some consequences of following the lead of the flesh?

What are some of the results of following the Spirit? *Romans 8:5-8 y 8:12-17*

Consequences of following the flesh _____

_____.

Consequences of following the Spirit _____

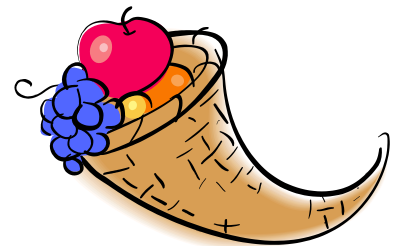
_____.

Galatians 5:16-26 – Fruit of the Spirit v. Fruit of the Flesh

List some of the “Works of the flesh.”



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



List some of the “fruit of the Spirit.”

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | |
| 2. _____ | |
| 3. _____ | |
| 4. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 9. _____ |



Part #3: Renounce the Old; Embrace the new!

The Old “Man” (the flesh) and the New “Man” (The Spirit)

Inside each Christian has “two selves:” The old and the new.

The new “Greg” and the old “Greg”



Colossians 3:1-17 – Putting the Flesh to Death

List some of the manifestations of the flesh which we seek to “kill.” (v.5-9)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____.

“... and put on the new self...” List some qualities of the “new you.” (Col. 3:10-17)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Comparison: Changing our lifestyle = Changing our clothing



“Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature..” Romans 13:14

Why, do you suppose, the Bible compares personal change to the daily activity of changing our clothing? Use your imagination a bit. What do the two processes have in common?



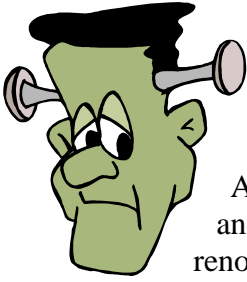
Ephesians 4:17 – 5:7 - Shedding the old ... putting on the new!

According to this text, what are some “corrupting” practices of our old self?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

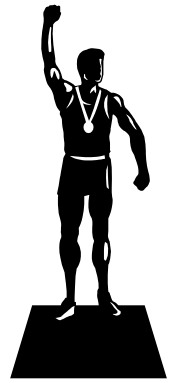
List some characteristics of the “new self.”

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



The “new you” – A prophetic declaration

As a prophetic exercise, jot down five negative qualities of the “old you,” and, by faith, note down the opposite of each. Then, prophetically, we renounce the old and embrace the new!



Example

The Old Greg – (Flesh)

1. Short Tempered
2. Blabbermouth
3. Depressed
4. Grumpy
5. Lazy

The New Greg (Spirit)

1. Patient
2. Discreet
3. Joyful
4. Cheerful
5. Diligent

..... Etc. etc.

The Old You

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

The New You

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Prayer of Faith

Lord, thank you that you have put a new spirit within me. I declare that I am a new creation in Christ. I declare by faith that I can live a new life. I receive your power to change, in the name of Jesus!