

WALKING
IN THE
SPIRIT

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT

HOW TO FULFILL THE ULTIMATE
PURPOSE OF CHRISTIANITY

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

THE SACRIFICIAL DEATH of Jesus for our sins brought the old creation to an end because everything in the old creation died in Him (see details in Chapter 4), while the coming of the Holy Spirit brought the reality of the new creation in Christ. Put in another way, the death of Jesus, by which the old is terminated, makes it possible for us to be part of the new creation through the new birth, while the Holy Spirit manifests the reality of the new birth in us. Without the Holy Spirit there will be neither new birth nor its manifestation because, as children of God, we are born of the Spirit (John 3:5–6) and required to be led by the Spirit (Romans 8:14). The problem is, many have accepted the new birth but have ignored or rejected the Holy Spirit. This is most pathetic especially in the case of those in the Pentecostal circle to whom the ministry of the Holy Spirit is supposed to be foundational belief. Failure to believe or accept the ministry of the Holy Spirit is the reason there is so much manifestation of the flesh in Christianity of today. This is the main reason why becoming like Jesus has remained a struggle for most Christians. In my first book, titled the *Ultimate Purpose of Christianity*, it was emphasized that the ultimate purpose of Christianity is to produce the likeness of God in man. It was also emphasized that the new birth, which is the means by which God

recreates us in His image that was distorted by sin at the garden of Eden, is the beginning of the process by which His likeness is reproduced in us. Unfortunately, many have taken the beginning of the process as an end in itself; that is, they assume that the process is already completed just because they have given their lives to Jesus or because they are born again. If that is correct, why then did the apostle Paul say,

“Don’t you realize that everyone who runs in a race runs to win, but only one runner gets the prize? Run like them, so that you can win. Everyone who enters an athletic contest goes into strict training. They do it to win a temporary crown, but we do it to win one that will be permanent. So I run—but not without a clear goal ahead of me. So I box—but not as if I were just shadow boxing, Rather, I toughen my body with punches and make it my slave so that I will not be disqualified after I have spread the Good News to others”?

—1 Corinthians 9:24–27 GWT

The bottom line is that it is possible to be disqualified even after you have been actively involved in preaching the good news or laboring in the church. Don’t let anyone fool you; Christianity is a process that begins with being born again, and as such being born again is not an end in itself but the compulsory or mandatory and unavoidable starting point. The real problem is that we have ignored God’s method and have tried to establish our own just as the children of Israel ignored God’s righteousness and tried to establish their own. “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:1–3). The sad part is that they were not only ignorant of God’s righteousness but actually tried to establish their own righteousness, which they must have assumed was of God or acceptable to God. Today we are ignorantly falling into the same error. If we are going to fulfill the ultimate purpose of

Christianity, which is to become like Jesus, we must return back to God's plan and method. We can never become like Jesus or fulfill the ultimate purpose of Christianity until we acknowledge, accept, and allow the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives. God's method is very simple—be born again and become His child, recreated in His image; be led by the Spirit and mature to become a son in His likeness. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14). It is really very simple; only those who will allow themselves to be led by the Holy Spirit are the ones who will mature or grow to become sons of God. We are recreated in His image by being born again, but we become like Him by being led by the Holy Spirit. To be led by the Spirit is to walk in the Spirit. The difference between being led by the Holy Spirit and walking in the Spirit is simply the perspective you are viewing them from. Leading is what the Holy Spirit does, but walking in the Spirit is what we do as a result of the leading. Thus, being led by the Holy Spirit and walking in the Spirit are two sides of the same coin. We can also say that walking in the Spirit is what we do that gives effect to the leading of the Spirit in our lives. Leading is the role of the Holy Spirit while walking in the Spirit is our role. There can never be any issue with the role of the Holy Spirit, but there are a lot of issues with our walking in the Spirit, and this is the reason for this book. The opposite of walking in the Spirit is walking in the flesh, and if we fail to walk in the Spirit, we will walk in the flesh by default. As long as we are walking in the flesh, we cannot walk in the Spirit, and we will not be led by the Spirit, who usually does not force Himself on anyone. If we are going to become like Jesus, we must be led by the Spirit, meaning we must walk in the Spirit.

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT IS MANDATORY

Walking in the Spirit is not a matter of choice; it is mandatory. The Bible says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:1). The question is, do you want to be free from condemnation? If your answer is yes, then you have no choice but to walk in the Spirit. It is only those who will stop walking in the flesh

by walking in the Spirit who are not under condemnation. “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law” (Galatians 5:16–18). You have been called to walk in the Spirit, and it is as you walk in the Spirit that you overcome the lust of the flesh. That is, the power of the flesh over you is broken as you walk in the Spirit. By the above Scripture it is also clear that it is as you are led by the Spirit that you are not under the law. That is, you are not under the law only when you allow the Holy Spirit to perform His role of leading you, which, if you respond to, becomes walking in the Spirit. The role of the Holy Spirit can be complete or effective only when you walk in the Spirit. Not being under the law implies that you are under grace, which means you are firmly planted in grace only when you are walking in the Spirit. That is to say, you experience, enjoy, and benefit from grace only when you walk in the Spirit or when you allow the leading of the Holy Spirit to manifest in your life. But the leading of the Holy Spirit will not manifest in your life automatically or by force. You allow its manifestation by walking in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit, through His leading, brings the resources of God into your life, but it is walking in the Spirit that puts them at your disposal. Which means sin, sicknesses/diseases, poverty, and all other works of the Devil cannot operate in your life when you are walking in the Spirit. Failure to walk in the Spirit is the root cause of most of the problems people are experiencing in church today. The Spirit and the flesh are contrary to each other, and the flesh will always manifest by default if you do not consciously walk in the Spirit. The problem of the church of today can be traced to people continuing to walk in the flesh though they have become children of God. To walk in the flesh is to allow your corrupt human nature to continue to lead or influence you. “Brothers and sisters, I couldn’t talk to you as spiritual people but as people still influenced by your corrupt nature. You were infants in your faith in Christ. I gave you milk to drink. I didn’t give you solid food because you weren’t ready for it. Even now you aren’t ready for it because you’re

still influenced by your corrupt nature. When you are jealous and quarrel among yourselves, aren't you influenced by your corrupt nature and living by human standards" (1 Corinthians 3:1–3 GWT). If this was an issue in the days of apostle Paul, such that he had to write to correct it, I wonder what we can say about the present time. There is too much of flesh in the Christianity of today, and you owe yourself the responsibility not to continue in it. One thing is sure: you cannot walk in the Spirit and in the flesh at the same time because they are contrary to each other. You are walking either in the Spirit or in the flesh. Walking in the Spirit one moment and the flesh the other cannot take you to the place God has prepared for you; only a continuous and consistent walk in the Spirit can take you there. Therefore the flesh must give way for the Spirit to thrive. "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:5–6). We all start in the flesh and move into the Spirit when we become children of God by the new birth. According to the above Scripture, as children of God, we are expected to serve in newness of spirit, which is possible only when we die to the flesh. "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:24–25). This Scripture is saying that the proof or confirmation that you belong to Christ is the crucifixion of your flesh with the affections and lusts, which qualifies you to live and walk in the Spirit. Notice in the Scripture that there is a difference between living in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit. The fact that you live in the Spirit does not mean that you are walking in the Spirit. On the day you agreed to be born again, you were automatically born into the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:12–13), but walking in the Spirit is not automatic; you have to walk in the Spirit by responding to or following the leading of the Holy Spirit. When you are born into the Spirit, your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life, but maintaining your name in the book of life depends on how you walk in the Spirit. That is why walking in the Spirit must

become our priority, and we must give it all our efforts and attention. The summary is that walking in the Spirit is mandatory for everyone who has become a child of God.

WALKING IN THE SPIRIT BRINGS PLEASURE TO GOD?

To walk in the Spirit is to allow all our actions and activities to proceed from and be executed by the Holy Spirit. That is why the Bible says, “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). Thus, walking in the Spirit makes our actions pleasing to God because they proceed from Him and are executed by His power. The truth is, the pleasure in what you do will always return to whoever originated and empowered such work or activity. To be specific, if the origin of any activity is the Devil, the pleasure will be his. In the same way, if the origin is a human being, the pleasure goes to the human being, and if it is you, the pleasure will also be yours. Thus, you can determine who gets the pleasure from the activities of your life by determining who empowered them. But the only person who really deserves the pleasure in what you do is God, if indeed you belong to Him. The Bible says, “He created you for His pleasure.” Ask yourself, why would God create you if He does not desire or expect any pleasure from you? Just look at everything around you that is made by man. I do not know of anything that man has made that is not intended to bring him one form of pleasure or the other. The only reason man is putting so much effort into research today is to maximize the pleasure or satisfaction it provides. That is why vehicles are being continuously redesigned, so that they will not only meet the need of transportation but also provided comfort and pleasure at the same time. Understand; therefore, that God being your creator deserves the pleasure in all that you do, and don’t forget that somebody will always get the pleasure in what you do anyway. That is why you must make deliberate effort to ensure that God is the One getting the pleasure in what you do. For God to get the pleasure in what you do, He must originate and execute such works or activities in you by His Holy Spirit.

God's simple plan is to make His will your will and then to execute that will in you. This is the only way that whatever is done in you can be satisfactory or acceptable and bring pleasure to Him. This is where many are missing it; they are just too anxious to do something for the Lord, but the truth is, if that thing does not originate from the Lord and is executed by the Lord, you have wasted your time and energy because such works will not give God any pleasure, nor will they survive the acid test of the kingdom of heaven. That is why Jesus warned that we can do nothing without Him "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing" (John 15:4–5). The fact that you can do nothing does not mean that you will be idle or unable to carry out any activity; it simply means that without Jesus you cannot do anything that is of eternal value or that is acceptable to God. Worst still, it simply means that whatever you are doing without Jesus is worthless. Also see 1 Corinthians 3:11–15. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." After we are saved, everything we are doing will be tried by the holy fire of God at the end. For our work to withstand the fire of God, it must be according to His pattern. We need to be careful in whatever we are doing for the Lord, especially as the end is drawing nearer and nearer. The truth is that God is not expecting us to do anything for Him; rather He requires us to allow Him to work through us (Philippians 2:13). Put in another way, God wants to live through us such that our lives will be a manifestation of His workings in us. That is why the apostle Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God:

for if righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” (Galatians 2:20–21). As children of God we have been crucified with Christ, meaning that officially we no longer exist as we were but now exist only in union with Jesus. It is He who should now live in us. The Almighty, Omnipotent, and Omnipresent, who is the Creator of all things and to whom nothing is impossible, requires our consent to live and work in and through us. What an incredible privilege! When we allow God to live and work through us, we become His workmanship. “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). According to this Scripture, we are basically called to be God’s workmanship. Unfortunately, whenever this passage of Scripture is read, the impression most people have is that we are to be God’s tools. This is a grievous error because we are more than tools to God. There is a big difference between tools and workmanship. If all God wanted were tools, animals would have been sufficient for Him to achieve that purpose. The truth is that in creating man God desired more than tools; otherwise He would have made man like robots. His desire from the beginning is to have man as His workmanship. Understand that declaring us His workmanship is an abnormal use of the word because products are not usually described as workmanship but as evidence or a result of it. Note that man is the only created being that God has labeled workmanship, which means there is something unique that God has put in man. Let us illustrate this with the example of the robot. Though the robot is a product of man, in a way it is also man’s workmanship, though in a limited sense. Once correctly programmed, the robot produces things as man himself would. Thus, the robot is not just a tool but an object that can exhibit workmanship. It is also the only product of man that has this capacity. The only difference between robot and man is that man has an independent will or capacity to make his own choices, whereas the robot, on the other hand, can do only what it has been programmed to do. The dictionary gives the meaning of *workmanship* as “formal skill in making things, especially in a way that makes them look good.” If we apply this meaning to the above

Scripture, we will discover that we are actually recreated in Christ to be God's skill for doing things. The problem is that many of us are too humble to accept whom God says we are; I pray that God will open your eyes to behold this truth in Jesus's name. To make progress in the Christian life, we must be prepared to accept who or all that God says we are. Now, skill is actually the ability to do things and do them well. Thus, God has not just made His ability available to us; He has made us His skill for doing things. As God's skill we are required to use the ability He has made available to us to function or perform as Jesus did. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12). Note that Jesus Himself was the one speaking, and He did not say the works will be done *through* you but *by* you. This is because we are to be workmanship, not tools. The power and wisdom for the work are not yours but in you by the Holy Spirit. Jesus is our example; whatever He did we ought to be able to do and even more. As God's skills nothing in the universe should be able to overcome us if we are utilizing the ability and functioning within the capacity God has made available to us. That is why the Bible says, "For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4 NIV). If you are God's workmanship or functioning as the skill of God, there is no way the world can overcome you. In fact, the whole creation of God is expecting us to manifest as sons of God. "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Romans 8:19). Note that sons of God speak of children of God maturing to become whom God has recreated them to be. Basically God has created us to become an extension of Him, which means God is enlarging His skill, and every one born of God has become an extension of God's skill. No wonder the Bible says, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man,

save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:9–11). We will understand this better in eternity. I don’t want to digress too much, but I want you to understand that God has great plans for your life, and you must not waste the opportunity. You will agree with me that workmanship, skill, or ability cannot apply itself to work. That is why God has put His Spirit in you, but for the Spirit to function, you must agree and consciously yield yourself to Him; this is what walking in the Spirit is all about. You can function as God’s workmanship only when you live and walk in the Spirit. That is, you cannot manifest or function as God’s workmanship when you are still walking in the flesh.

It is sad that many, in an attempt to please the Lord, are actually laboring in the flesh. We must understand that God is interested not only in seeing work done through us but also in who does the work, whether it is the flesh or the Spirit. That is why God says “it is not by might or by power, but by my Spirit” (Zechariah 4:6). There is nothing that is done in the flesh that can ever please God. “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:7–8). Thus, walking in the flesh will always amount to offering strange fire before the Lord. Remember the case of Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 10:1–2. “And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.” Nadab and Abihu did what came to their minds instead of what God commanded, and they paid dearly with their lives. I am certain that Nadab and Abihu, if given the chance, would have argued that they were rendering service to God by offering the incense. Actually, there was nothing wrong with the incense, but in their state of drunkenness they thought any fire was OK. What they didn’t realize at that point was that not all fire was acceptable to God. This should be a warning to us because the only fire that is acceptable to God is the fire of the Holy Ghost. Also note that

there was another fire readily available to them. What is the fire/power behind what you are doing for the Lord? Now, when I say “what you are doing,” I am not referring to pastors or ministers only; if you are a Christian, everything you are doing is for the Lord. “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Colossians 3:17). Also see 1 Corinthians 6:19–20. “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” As a Christian everything you are doing must glorify God, and to glorify God means that it must be done only by the fire/power of God. Any other fire/power will be a strange fire.

Let’s also see the example of Uzzah, who tried to help the ark of God when the oxen carrying it stumbled and also paid dearly with His life. “And David and all the house of Israel played before the LORD on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals. And when they came to Nachon’s threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God” (2 Samuel 6:5–7). God’s anger was kindled against Uzzah because he responded to a spiritual matter in the flesh. Thus, strange fire also connotes the power of the flesh. These two examples show clearly that to labor for the Lord by any other power or the power of the flesh will always amount to offering strange fire before the Lord because you will be guilty of attempting to do the work of the Lord without the Lord of the work. That is why the Bible says, “Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6).