

**Connection with Unit Theme:** To complement the small group study “*The Work of the Holy Spirit*,” this sermon will expound upon the calling to journey with the Spirit. The outline will present the biblical reasons for walking by the Spirit and show the results a believer will experience in this journey.

**Introduction:** What was our favorite question to ask as a child? You got it! Why? We always wanted to know why. Truth be told, we tended to ask this question as a teenager too. We made an art out of it by rolling our eyes and dragging out the word. If we are truly honest, we still ask the question today. Why do we have to do the project at work that way? Why did that person make that decision? Let’s ask a why question today and find the answer in God’s word. Why would we want to walk with the Spirit?

**1. We walk with the Spirit because it is a command (v. 16)**

Paul wrote to the church at Galatia as they were struggling in their Christian walk. False teachers had come into the fellowship and told them that they must practice ceremonial traditions in order to truly know and follow Jesus. The false teachers were adding to the gospel and Paul would have none of that. Paul reiterates the singularity of the gospel throughout the book and here he tells the church to walk by the Spirit.

The phrase walk by the Spirit found in verse 16 is written as a command to be fulfilled in the now. All too often we find ourselves wondering what God’s will might be. We make this a matter of prayer and we might even enlist others around us to join us in prayer. When we see a command clearly stated in God’s word, we know it is His will for us to live in obedience to His commands. Yes, we can pray about this. But, we need to pray as we strive to live out the command.

**2. We walk with the Spirit to fight the flesh (v. 16-17)**

In the spirit of asking “Why?”, it would seem that we could ask this question again. Why would we want to walk by the Spirit? We find two biblical answers to this question. First, if we walk by the Spirit we will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh. The desires of the flesh are clearly articulated in verses 19-21. Walking by the Spirit does not mean that we will never sin again. As long as we are still in the flesh, we will struggle with the things of the flesh. But walking by the Spirit does mean that we will not be defined by or habitually live within the desires of the flesh.

The second reason for wanting to walk by the Spirit is so that we can actively combat the desires of the flesh. Paul told the church at Galatia that the Spirit and flesh are

opposed to each other. The word opposed is a military term. It means to actively and consistently engage in war tactics against another force. The desires of the flesh, which are many, do not get along with the desires of the Spirit. If we want to fight against our sin nature, then we must seek to live out the command to consistently walk by the Spirit.

**3. We walk with the Spirit to have a fruitful life (v. 22-25)**

As we strive to live out the command of walking by the Spirit, God's Spirit within us actively engages in conflict against the desires of the flesh and we begin to live fruitful lives. A simple, yet key word, in verse 22 is the word "is". This word is a factual word. The verse would be dramatically different if "is" was replaced with "could be", "should be" or "might be". All of the other phrases show possibilities. Is deals in definitive. This means that when someone is walking by the Spirit the characteristics listed in verse 22-23 will be seen in that person's lifestyle.

Even though these characteristics will be clearly seen, it does not mean that each one will be fully developed. Many might find themselves praying for patience and they want that patience now. Others might struggle in the area of self-control or kindness towards others. Those engaged in a journey with the Spirit are not perfect, but the fruits of the Spirit are becoming more and more evident as the daily journey continues.

**Conclusion:** Once a "Why?" question is answered, the next question tends to be "How?". I see the importance of doing what is asked of me, but I don't know how. We see the importance of walking by the Spirit, but do we truly know how? If you do not know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then walking by the Spirit means professing faith in Christ alone and beginning a journey with Him. If you do know Christ as Savior, then walking by the Spirit means asking Him to empower you to proclaim Christ and show you the sin in your life that needs to be removed.

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