

## **Commanded to Live by Faith**

In a world where we're constantly told to be self-sufficient and independent, there's a profound truth that challenges this mindset: we weren't created to navigate life on our own. Just as the old American Express commercial urged people not to leave home without their credit card, there's something far more essential we need - the Holy Spirit.

### **God's Mercy in Our Ignorance**

#### **When God Overlooks Our Mistakes**

The Apostle Paul, speaking to the Athenians, made a remarkable statement: "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent" - Acts 17:30. This reveals something incredible about God's character - He has been protecting and providing for us even when we didn't know we needed Him.

Before we understood our authority over the enemy or learned to walk by faith, God's mercy covered us. He protected us from consequences we never even realized we deserved. This wasn't because of our faith - it was pure, unmerited grace.

### **The Age of Accountability**

But there comes a time when God calls us to spiritual maturity. He's no longer content with us living accidentally blessed lives. Now He commands us to repent - to turn from our old way of thinking and living - and to deliberately partner with Him.

### **Moving from Carried to Walking**

#### **The Problem with Staying the Same**

God doesn't want us to remain spiritual infants who need to be carried through life. Like a parent who eventually expects their child to walk alongside them rather than being carried, God expects us to mature spiritually.

The danger of remaining in a "carried" state is that we never change or grow. We might make it through life protected by God's mercy, but we remain the same person at 75 that we were at 25 - just older, with more wrinkles and perhaps less hair.

## **Partnership with God**

God desires partnership, not possession. Unlike the devil who seeks to possess and control people, God invites us into a collaborative relationship. He wants us to willingly walk with Him, learning His ways and making deliberate choices that align with His will.

## **Recognizing Our Insufficiency**

### **The Root of All Problems**

The greatest plague facing humanity isn't external circumstances or other people - it's pride. Our biggest problem is the spirit of self-sufficiency and independence that whispers, "I don't need God."

This pride traces back to the Garden of Eden, where humanity first believed the lie that we could be like God and handle life on our own. Every generation since has inherited this tendency toward spiritual independence.

### **Learning from Jesus' Example**

Jesus, who was incredibly successful in His earthly ministry, never depended on Himself for anything. He repeatedly said, "Of myself I can do nothing" and "The Father who dwells in Me does the works." He was completely led by the Spirit and fully dependent on the Father.

As Paul wrote: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God" - 2 Corinthians 3:5.

## **How to Be Led by the Spirit**

### **Start with God's Word**

Being led by the Spirit begins with knowing God through His Word. However, we must remember that "the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" - 2 Corinthians 3:6. It's not enough to have head knowledge; we need the Spirit to write God's truth on our hearts.

### **Develop Sensitivity to His Leading**

**We need to become increasingly sensitive to the Holy Spirit's guidance. This means:**

- Recognizing when He's dealing with us about something
- Responding quickly to His conviction
- Learning to distinguish His voice from our own thoughts
- Building a habit of seeking His direction in all decisions

### **Give God Glory for Everything**

One key to being led by the Spirit is recognizing how much He has already led us. Every good thing in our lives - our talents, opportunities, protection, and provision - comes from Him. When we acknowledge this, we position ourselves for continued guidance.

## **The Transformation Process**

### **From Glory to Glory**

When we actively follow the Spirit's leading, we don't stay the same. We're transformed from one level of glory to another. This isn't just about external circumstances improving; it's about internal character change.

Like the Apostle Paul, who went from being a persecutor of Christians to the greatest church planter in history, we can experience radical transformation when we submit to God's leading.

## **Growing Pains Are Normal**

Just as children experience growing pains during physical growth spurts, we may experience spiritual growing pains. Trials and tests often serve as catalysts for spiritual growth, teaching us lessons we couldn't learn any other way.

These difficult seasons help us recognize areas where we've been trusting in ourselves rather than God, leading to greater humility and dependence on Him.

## **Becoming Life Givers**

### **From Life Suckers to Life Givers**

Most people in the world are what could be called "life-sucking souls" - they drain energy and hope from situations and relationships. But when we're led by the Spirit and transformed by His power, we become life givers.

As Paul wrote: "Who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" - 2 Corinthians 3:6.

## **The Goal of Spiritual Maturity**

The ultimate goal isn't just to make it through life safely. It's to become more and more like Jesus - to be transformed into His image and to carry His life to others wherever we go.

## **Life Application**

This week, challenge yourself to move from being spiritually "carried" to actively walking with God. Instead of just hoping things work out or relying on past mercy, deliberately seek the Holy Spirit's guidance in your daily decisions.

Start each day by acknowledging your need for His help and asking Him to lead you. When good things happen, immediately give Him the glory rather than taking credit yourself.

When you face challenges, resist the urge to figure things out on your own and instead ask for His wisdom and direction.

### **Questions for Reflection:**

- In what areas of my life am I still trying to be self-sufficient rather than depending on God?
- How can I become more sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading in my daily decisions?
- What evidence do I see of spiritual growth and transformation in my life over the past year?
- Am I a life giver or a life drainer in my relationships and interactions with others?

Remember, God doesn't want you to just exist - He wants you to truly live the abundant life He's provided. This happens when you learn to be expertly led by His Spirit, growing from glory to glory as you walk in partnership with Him.

### **Quotes**

1. "Don't face a single day without the Helper, the Holy Spirit."
2. "God never designed you to navigate life by opinions, experience, or human wisdom alone."
3. "Faith is our profession, and being led by the Spirit is our expertise."
4. "God's mercy often protects us in spite of ourselves."
5. "God may overlook ignorance for a season, but He calls every person to repentance."
6. "Grace often carries people farther than their faith has yet learned to walk."
7. "Faith begins where accountability meets obedience."
8. "Our sufficiency is not in ourselves—it is entirely in God."
9. "Pride is mankind's greatest enemy and your greatest obstacle."

10. "You don't have what it takes—but God does."
11. "Jesus succeeded because He trusted the Father, not Himself."
12. "Every good thing in your life bears the fingerprints of God."
13. "God doesn't want accidental blessings—He wants intentional obedience."
14. "God didn't create you merely to exist; He created you to live His kind of life."
15. "The goal isn't just to survive life—it's to be transformed by God's life."
16. "If your dreams haven't outgrown your past, your vision hasn't caught up with God's purpose."
17. "Transformation means becoming so much more that looking back no longer appeals to you."
18. "God never calls you to take the land alone—He goes with you."
19. "The journey toward God's promise is where dependence on Him is learned."
20. "Stop being a consumer of life and become a giver of it."

## **Verses**

1. Acts 17:30
2. 1 John 5:18
3. 2 Corinthians 3:2-6
4. Jeremiah 1:5
5. Deuteronomy 30:19
6. Romans 7:9
7. Job 31:27

## 8. 1 Peter 1:22

### **Summary**

We weren't created to navigate life independently, but to be led by the Holy Spirit. While God's mercy has protected us in our spiritual ignorance, He now calls us to mature from being spiritually carried to actively walking with Him. The greatest obstacle to this growth is pride and self-sufficiency - the lie that we don't need God. Jesus demonstrated complete dependence on the Father for His success, showing us the path to true spiritual maturity. Being led by the Spirit requires knowing God's Word, developing sensitivity to His guidance, and giving Him glory for everything. This transformation process changes us from life-draining individuals to life-giving ministers who reflect Christ's character to the world.