



April 26, 2026 | Dr. Jimmy Stewart

Jesus Changes Everything

Flesh → Spirit

Scripture: Galatians 5:16–25; Romans 8:5–11, 16; John 3:5–8; Acts 1:8

Spotlight: The Spirit-filled life is the only life that pleases God and builds others up.

Summary: Jesus does not simply make us better people outwardly—He gives us new life *inwardly* by the presence and working of the Holy Spirit. The flesh always pulls us toward sin, self-reliance, and desires that oppose God, but the Spirit leads us into holiness, freedom, true life and the blessings of God. Galatians 5 shows the battle between the flesh and the Spirit, Romans 8 reveals that only the Spirit gives life and peace, and John 3 teaches that this new life is born from above. The Christian life cannot be lived in human strength because it is a spiritual life. The Spirit-filled life is a surrendered life; a yielded life. The Spirit-led life is the only life that pleases God, produces lasting fruit, and reveals beyond doubt the transforming power of Jesus. Therefore, we must stop striving in the limited efforts of the flesh and daily yield to, walk with, and depend on the unlimited power of the Holy Spirit.

Each person needs the Holy Spirit for life, liberty, and to produce spiritual fruit. Without the Holy Spirit we have no possibility of winning the tug of war with the flesh.

Romans 8:16

For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children.

I. Your Flesh Will Never Take You Where God Wants You To Go!

Galatians 5:16-21

16 So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. 17 The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the

opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. 18 But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses. 19 When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, 21 envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

II. The Holy Spirit Produces Life the Flesh Never Can!

John 6:63

The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

Galatians 5:16

So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves.

The Holy Spirit - Advocate - *Comforter, or Encourager, or Counselor.*

Galatians 5:22-26

22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. 25 Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. 26 Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.

Galatians 2:20

III. The Holy Spirit Creates a New Community of Believers.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

So encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.

Romans 15:2

We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord.

Philippians 2:2-5

2 Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and

compassionate? 2 Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. 3 Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. 4 Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

The Spirit's work is not just personal; it is **relational** and **congregational**. Flesh tears people apart through jealousy, conceit, provocation, and division. The Spirit produces humility, encouragement, patience, and love that builds others up. A Spirit-led believer does not merely avoid sin—he becomes a blessing to others within the family of God.

Where the flesh divides, the Spirit unites and strengthens the body.

If the Spirit is leading us, we will not just grow inwardly—we will build others up outwardly and grow numerically.

IV. You Must Be Born Again.

John 3:5-8

5 Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. 6 Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. 7 So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."

Romans 8:5-11

5 Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. 6 So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace. 7 For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God's laws, and it never will. 8 That's why those who are still under the control of their sinful nature can never please God. 9 But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) 10 And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. 11 The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

Next Steps: Stop striving in your strength, your flesh—yield to and engage with the Spirit today.

Life Application:

1. **When you hear the statement, “The flesh will never take you where God wants you to go,” what area of your life feels most exposed by that truth right now?** In what areas of your life and even locations are you most likely to trust your impulses, emotions, or self-effort instead of the leadership of the Holy Spirit?
2. **In Galatians 5:19–21 and Romans 8:5–8, what stands out most to you about the nature of the flesh?** Why is it important to understand that the flesh is not just weak, but actually opposed to God and leads to death?
3. **Have you been trying to defeat fleshly patterns with willpower instead of surrender?**
What has that produced in you and from you?
4. **If someone examined your life over the last month, what evidence would suggest that the Holy Spirit is actively leading you?** What evidence might suggest that you are still striving in the flesh?
5. **The Holy Spirit produces fruit that builds one another up. In your current relationships, are you more often contributing encouragement, peace, and strength—or irritation, distance, and conflict?** What would it look like this week for the Spirit to use you to build someone up in the Lord?
6. **Jesus says in John 3:5–8 that we must be born of the Spirit. How would you explain that you have experienced a genuine spiritual new birth?** How have you seen people confuse outward morality with inward transformation?
7. **Romans 8:9–11 teaches that the Spirit of God lives in every true believer. How should that truth affect the way you think about your daily struggles, temptations, and responsibilities?** What changes when you remember that you are not facing life alone?
8. **The fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23 is evidence of God’s work within us. Which aspect of this fruit do you most need the Spirit to grow in your life right now, and why?** What might be hindering that growth?
9. **Galatians 5:25 says, “Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives.” What does it practically look like to keep in step with the Spirit?** What habits, attitudes, or distractions tend to pull you out of step with Him? Confess those to the Lord and ask Him to keep you filled with the Holy Spirit.

A professional version of ChatGPT was accessed as a creative tool during the development of this Sermon Guide, primarily in the Summary and the Life Application Questions. Carefully and fully edited by Dr. James M. Stewart for First Baptist Church Gulfport, April 23, 2026.