



FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH
FAIR OAKS RANCH

Day 30: Walk by the Spirit

Galatians 5:16, 25 *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh... If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. (ESV)*

DEVOTIONAL

Abiding is not a technical or theological term reserved only for the spiritually elite. Abiding is an every day reality that draws us into holy living. The focus text for today gives us the simple instructions for practicing this, moment by moment: “walk by the Spirit.” Christ is not distance from us; He has taken up residence within every believer through The Holy Spirit, and the daily walk of holiness is simply learning to live in communion and step with Him.

Paul uses two words for walking, and they’re worth noticing. In verse 16, “walk” is *peripateo* — the general word for how you conduct your whole life, your daily manner of living. It implies the forward progress that is produced by constant steady movement. But in verse 25 the text shifts to a sharper word: *stoicheo*, which means to walk in line, to keep in step, to march in formation like soldiers in a row moving to a cadence. It is a picture of ordered, responsive, precise, coordinated movement — staying perfectly in step with a partner who is leading. The Spirit sets the pace and the direction; our task is to keep in step with Him, neither lagging behind in disobedience nor rushing ahead in our own strength.

The text then makes a striking promise: “walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.” Here is the strategy. It does not say, “Focus all your energy on fighting resisting the flesh, and then with enough self-control you will be walking by the Spirit.” It says the reverse: occupy yourself with walking by the Spirit, make it the priority of your thoughts, and the flesh will not get its way. This is one of the most freeing truths in the pursuit of purity. The path to holiness is not a white-knuckled war against sin; it is a positive, moment-by-moment following of the Spirit. John MacArthur taught that sanctification is not achieved by human effort alone but is the work of the indwelling Spirit, as the believer yields to Him and walks in obedience to the Word.

Think of it like darkness and light. You don't drive out the darkness in a room by fighting it, sweeping at it, wrestling it to the ground. You simply let in the light, and the darkness has to go. It literally flees the light. So it is with the flesh. Fill your walk with the Spirit, respond to His promptings, obey His leading, stay in step with His direction, and the desires of the flesh find no room to rule. Holiness is less about how hard you push against sin, and more about how closely you keep in step with the Spirit.

As any veteran who learned to march knows, when you get out of step with the cadence you don't stop walking or slow down; you actually skip forward. One little hop resets your footing and you are back in step with the leader. The same is true when we get out of step with the Spirit. Do not stop walking, slow down or step out formation. Skip forward, back into step with where the Spirit is moving.

TAKE AWAY

You do not defeat darkness by fighting it; you let in the light. Do not just battle the flesh, keep in step with the Spirit today, and sin finds no room to rule.

PRAYER PROMPT

Ask the Holy Spirit to set your pace today, and help you keep in step with His leading rather than running ahead or lagging behind.