

# A Practical Life in The Spirit

There are definite steps you can take to live a practical life in the Spirit and that is today's topic.

## Introduction

One of the most common subjects people ask us to teach is about living a life in the spirit. There are many resources for this, and we have spoken on this subject many times from different viewpoints in the past. However, today we are talking about living a practical life in the Spirit.

The three things that are essential to living a practical life in the Spirit are self-control, guidance from the Holy Spirit, and spiritual discipline.

Paul writes in Romans 8:5-6:

### Romans 8:5-6

(5) Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. (6) The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.

So how can we live a practical life according to the Spirit? Let's look at three steps we can take.

## Practice Self Control

The first step we need to take is to practice self-control. Of the three steps we are sharing today, this can often be the most difficult. It is an act of will on our part to accomplish this but is essential to living a life in the Spirit and being a witness of Jesus Christ and citizen of Heaven in this lost and dying world.

Paul writes in Galatians 5:16-17:

### Galatians 5:16-17

(16) So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. (17) For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

Self-control is an essential part of living a life in the Spirit and it involves making wise choices when faced with temptation. This is not meant to control us or remove our own free will. It is knowing when our God-given freedom can be expressed and when we should be more understanding of the situation and place where we find ourselves and respect the others around us.

We read in Acts 10 that Peter was hungry while meditating on God and he saw a vision of a large sheet being let down from heaven with all sorts of animals both clean and unclean for a Hebrew to eat. God told Peter to get up, kill, and eat. The Lord had declared all creatures clean and therefore Peter could eat anything presented.

If I invite a friend who is a Hebrew to my home for dinner, with respect to this friend, I would not serve food that my friend would consider unclean like pork. It is perfectly fine to eat, and from what we read



in Acts 10 we know the Lord has made what was once unclean animals clean. But practicing self-control means showing respect for others sometimes.

If I find myself in a situation where the rules or established customs are somewhat restrictive but do not violate what the Lord has commanded me to do or not do, I am to practice self-control and abide by the rules or customs.

This is what Paul meant when he wrote to the Galatians about self-control. Do not let your selfish desires or rights overpower the will and guidance of the Holy Spirit. A practical life in the Spirit practices self-control.

### Guidance From The Holy Spirit

The second step we must take in living a practical life in the Spirit is to rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance in all situations.

Jesus is recorded in John 16:13 saying:

John 16:13

**(13) But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.**

We can trust that the Holy Spirit will guide us when faced with difficult decisions and that He will lead us into a closer relationship with God. It is not only difficult decisions though. The Holy Spirit is our guide, our counselor, and our equipper.

All the gifts and talents needed to accomplish the plan and purpose God has for your life come through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit leads you to the places and people you need to learn from and serve. All the knowledge you need to live out your day comes through the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit may lead you to school programs or standard training for things, and he may supernaturally impart knowledge and wisdom to you. Nonetheless, what you need to live a practical life in the Spirit comes through the Holy Spirit.

I am reminded of the stories of missionaries of old who relied on the Holy Spirit to give them the language knowledge they needed to communicate as they sailed to far-off lands to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They did not speak the languages of the native peoples they encountered but they went anyway with the prompting of the Lord and the knowledge and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Now, most missionaries go to language schools before they head to far-off lands with different languages. Is one way better or more correct than the other? No. The key is to follow the prompting of the Lord through the Holy Spirit. Trust that small still voice in you from the Lord.

A practical life in the Spirit is a life that relies on the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

### Practice Spiritual Disciplines

The third step we need to live a practical life in the Spirit is to practice spiritual disciplines. It is these spiritual disciplines that help us stay in tune with the Holy Spirit so we can hear his guidance and see his teaching and equipping.



Hebrews 12:1-2 says:

Hebrews 12:1-2

(1) Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, (2) fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Practicing spiritual disciplines like prayer, Bible study, and fasting are essential for living a life in the Spirit. These practices help us remain focused on God and His will for us. These are not religious rules or duties to follow. They are necessary to thrive as a Christian who is living a practical life in the Spirit.

There is no rule in life that you must eat food or breathe air. However, I can guarantee that if you stop eating food or drinking water long enough you will die. If you stop breathing air you will die. These are not rules, they are essential things to live a natural life.

Spiritual disciplines are just as essential for a practical life in the Spirit for a Christian. We must spend time in prayer. The Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

(16) Rejoice always, (17) pray continually, (18) give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

He follows that in verse 19 saying, "Do not quench the Spirit."

The first, and most important, spiritual discipline is prayer. This is simply a conversation with God. Approach the Lord humbly and lift your prayers to him. If you would like to know more about prayer, the second spiritual discipline, bible study, will help with that.

The second spiritual discipline, Bible study, is imperative for a practical life in the Spirit. In your Bible reading and study look at how Jesus prayed. See how he spoke with God the Father. Read how the disciples interacted with Jesus and ministered to others. Learn from their mistakes and their triumphs.

The third spiritual discipline is to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus. It is in and through Jesus that we are saved. It is through his sacrifice on the cross that we are adopted into the family of God as co-heirs with Jesus. We can avoid the traps and perils of this world by keeping our focus on Jesus.

A practical life in the Spirit must practice spiritual discipline.

## Conclusion

Living a practical life in the Spirit is possible when we practice self-control, rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance, and practice spiritual disciplines. It requires all three. Let us strive to live a life that is following and pointing people to Jesus by living a practical life in the Spirit.

