

# *Pathway*

PERSONAL CHRISTIAN GROWTH SERIES

Set aside a special time each day to go through a *Pathway* study. Even if you miss a day or two, don't skip those studies. Begin again where you left off! Each daily study is designed to take only 10-12 minutes, or longer ... it's up to you! Be honest with yourself. This is a private time just between you and God.

## **Introduction — *Walking in the Spirit***

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Do you know what it means to walk in the Spirit? It doesn't refer to a leisurely stroll along the beach! Rather, walking in the Spirit means living in obedience to God's will for you. It means yielding your life to Him! Do you want to walk in the Spirit? If so, this *Pathway* series may answer many of your questions and start you on the right track!

## DAY ONE — Walking in the Spirit

**Hiding it in My Heart:** Memorize the following verse. Use it to remind yourself of the importance of “walking in the Spirit.” ... *Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Gal. 5:16).*

**TODAY'S PRAYER:** It's easy to rationalize why you can't walk in the Spirit. Talk to the Lord and ask Him to help you get rid of the excuses that might be plaguing your life.

**TODAY'S VERSE:** *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:25).*

## A Definition That's for Real

“Hey, Ter, I saw you talking to Matt Blanchard.” Christie chose a dish of pudding and put it on her lunch tray. “But you don't seem like his type at all!”

Terri sighed. “We've gone to the same church forever. In fact, the first Sunday my mom put me in the nursery, Matt bloodied my lip with a dump truck.”

“Matt's a Christian? You're kidding! He's in my Chemistry class, and today he mouthed off at the teacher and got sent to the office. Other times, I've heard him swear and ... Oh, never mind. I'm sure you know what he's like.”

It wasn't any secret that Matt had serious problems. Terri had even heard one of the youth leaders say Matt “wasn't walking in the Spirit.”

“Walking in the Spirit” is a common “Christian” term. How would you define it?

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**A Look in the Book:** Read Ephesians 2:1-10.

This passage speaks of a person's Christian walk. The biblical meaning of “walk” concerns the way you live your everyday life. It's the sum total of the daily attitudes and actions that make up your lifestyle.

The definition of “in the Spirit” means according to God's will. “Walking in the Spirit” means walking in obedience to God's will and yielding to Him. You have the Holy Spirit, who lives in you, guiding you through the Word.

Keeping that definition in mind, how does Paul characterize the person who is not saved?

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*And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor ... For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light ... See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise (Eph. 5:2,8,15).*

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another (Gal. 5:22-26).

How does Paul characterize the person who is walking in the Spirit?

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Obviously, not all Christians are walking in the Spirit. You might go to church on Sunday and intellectually agree with what the pastor says. Monday, however, you may walk a very different sort of life.

In what ways do you feel Christians sometimes neglect to walk in the Spirit?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Did you write any of the following excuses?

1. Laziness. You know you should spend more time studying your Bible and talking with the Lord in prayer. You know you should go to church consistently. You know these things, but just don't have the desire to do them.
2. Peer pressure. A lot of your problems are caused by yielding to the pressures of friends. When you face the choice between the Lord and your peers, often your peers get the victory.
3. Lack of interest. You like the fact that you're a Christian, and you really believe that Christ died for your sins. But you're too busy with your own life to care about living totally for Christ.
4. You want to be in charge instead of putting God in charge of your life.

Hopefully, you want to walk in the Spirit. A good indication of that desire is the fact that you're reading *Pathway* right now.

## DAY TWO — Walking in the Spirit

**Hiding it in My Heart:** The word “mind” in Romans 8:5 includes your attitudes, motivations, and choices. Memorize this verse so that the Holy Spirit can use it to direct your life. *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit (Rom. 8:5).*

**TODAY'S PRAYER:** Start each day with prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you through everything you do.

## A Desire That's for Real

Recently, pastor told a story about his Jr. high days.

“One afternoon I was hanging around with Tommy, the kid next door,” the pastor explained. “I spent time with him, although I knew he had a habit of doing things that were wrong. This particular day, we wandered over to the highway, and Tommy began throwing stones at cars. Every time he hit one, he screamed a bad word.

“I didn’t throw stones. I knew that was wrong. I did, however, make up a nonsensical word that I pretended meant the same thing Tommy’s word meant. When Tommy hit a car, I yelled the made-up word. Pretty soon Tommy was yelling with me, thinking it was pretty funny I had invented a new bad word. I was getting as close to sin as possible, without actually doing it.

“Now I know that substituting the made-up word was wrong. I was pretending it had a bad meaning, and that was just as wrong as saying Tommy’s word. In fact, I shouldn’t have been watching Tommy throw stones in the first place!”

Maybe you think this pastor’s story is kind of ridiculous, but you’ve probably done something similar. According to your standards (not necessarily the Lord’s), you come as close to sinning as possible.

\_\_\_ You don’t exactly lie to your parents. But at the same time, you’re an expert at being vague about the truth!

\_\_\_ You wouldn’t dare ask the Ouija board any questions yourself, but you’ve decided it’s educational to watch your friends messing around.

\_\_\_ You don’t regularly watch that immoral television program, but you do sort of linger when changing channels.

When was the last time you came as close to sin as you could? Do you think you can come close to sinning without actually sinning?

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**A Look in the Book:** Read Psalm 19:7-14. *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is Thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer.*

Here David outlines several reasons why you should desire to live according to God’s commandments.

Fill in the missing words from Psalm 19 which show the benefits of walking with the Lord and obeying His Word. (The first one is done for you.)

God’s Word is ...

1. ... converting the soul.
2. ... making \_\_\_\_\_ the simple.
3. ... \_\_\_\_\_ the heart.
4. ... \_\_\_\_\_ the eyes.
5. ... \_\_\_\_\_ forever.
6. ... the judgments of the Lord are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

You probably already knew about those benefits (maybe not word for word, but at least in concept). Most Christians do. Yet, still there’s that attitude of “how close can I get to sin without actually sinning?” Christianity is not a game, it’s real life!

A pastor told his teens, “It’s interesting how many times kids and adults have come to me with the question, ‘Is this wrong?’ They want to know if they can participate in some activity and still get away with it. But, seldom does anyone come to me and ask ‘Is this right?’ Seldom do they say, ‘I want to be SURE I’m staying away from sin!’”

To walk in the Spirit, you must obey God’s Word. You can’t just go your own merry way, hoping that somehow you’ll automatically do the right thing. You can’t ignore Bible study, prayer, and Christian fellowship. You can’t just push Christian service and responsibility off until some day in the future. If you don’t make an effort, sin WILL take control. The Holy Spirit lives in your life. You need to continually allow Him to guide you through the Word in your priorities, desires, and lifestyle!

### DAY THREE — *Walking in the Spirit*

**TODAY'S PRAYER:** Depend on the Holy Spirit to help you through each day. Ask for His help in defeating your old, sinful nature.

**TODAY'S VERSE:** *The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (Rom. 8:16-18).*

## A Battle That's for Real!

"Hey, Sarah, how about going to the game with me Saturday?"

Sarah needed no introduction. She knew it was Ryan Dickson standing next to her. But, it was simply unbelievable he was asking HER for a date!

The books she had been stuffing in her locker tumbled to the floor. She turned around, tripping over her Geometry text in the process. "What did you say?"

"I said, how about going to the game with me?"

"Could ... could ... I let you know tomorrow?"

"Sure, no problem." Ryan gave her a half wave and walked on down the hall.

Sarah couldn't remember ever facing such a difficult dilemma. She wanted to date Ryan Dickson. Any girl at Case High School wanted to date Ryan.

Yet, Ryan was not a Christian, and Sarah knew dating him would be contrary to the principles of God's Word. Without Christ as a common bond, their relationship could never work. Why begin something which is destined for failure?

The argument within herself began.

"But he's such a nice guy."

"He's not a Christian."

"He's ambitious. He gets good grades, and he obviously has moral values."

"But he doesn't love the Lord as his Savior as I do."

"Maybe, in time, he would."

"But he doesn't now."

On and on, Sarah battled with herself.

"Why do I want to say 'yes' so badly when I know the right answer is 'no'?"

Good question!

**A Look in the Book:** One of the people who asked the "why am I doing this when I should be doing that" question is the Apostle Paul. **Read Romans 7:15-25**

Maybe you thought Paul was "above" such conflict, but the struggle was just as real for him as it is for you. What is Paul's opinion of himself as he struggles with his sin?

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What do you think is the correct approach to this struggle for the Christian?

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The first verse of chapter 8 is a comforting answer to Paul's chapter 7 question. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Rom. 8:1).*

Even though you face a struggle, what does the Lord say is true of the Christian?

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You were born with a sin nature. As you grew, you realized your sin nature is strong. No one had to teach you how to angrily scream in an attempt to get what you wanted. No one had to teach you to hit your brother over the head because you didn't want to share your train set. Your sin nature is an expert!

But then one day, you received Christ as Savior, and you got a brand new spiritual nature. Yet, you're still human. Your sin nature is active and not feeling particularly happy about losing control of your life.

Think about it. How old were you when you accepted Christ?

That's how much longer your old nature has been in charge of your life. No wonder you, and every other Christian, experience a struggle.

Walking in the Spirit takes effort. The old nature does not relinquish control easily. But trusting and yielding to Christ daily will give you victory.



## DAY FOUR — *Walking in the Spirit*

**TODAY'S PRAYER:** Ask the Lord to give you excitement and desire to be fed from His Word. Ask Him to guide you in truth and to strengthen you to walk consistently in the Spirit.

**TODAY'S VERSE:** *But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine (Titus 2:1).*

### A Spiritual “Diet” That’s for Real

Let me tell you about Andy. For years he attended Sunday School and church. He also regularly showed up for Awana Club, and one year even finished a handbook.

Then, when Andy was a junior in high school, a friend invited him to a Friday night Bible study. Andy went. It sounded real good. The leader used many of the same words Andy had heard in the pastor’s sermons. So, Andy went back the next week and the next and the next.

“Do you really understand what they’re teaching at that study?” asked his older friend, Chris. “I don’t like to interfere, but I know they don’t agree with our doctrine.”

“What differences does doctrine make?” Andy asked. “I’m just a kid! Besides, those people at the Bible study talk about God.”

“They don’t believe in salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They don’t believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. They teach you that you get saved by doing good works.”

“Don’t worry, Chris. Everything’s fine,” Andy reassured his friend.

That was five months ago. Andy no longer attends Sunday School or church, and no longer studies the Bible on his own. His entire attitude toward life has changed — and not for the better.

*Too bad, you think, but what does doctrine have to do with walking in the Spirit?*

What is your definition of doctrine? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Was your definition simply “teachings of the Bible?” That’s exactly what doctrine is all about. It’s not something only attainable by seminary honor students. If you’re going to be a healthy, Spirit-filled Christian, YOU MUST KNOW WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES.

Potato chips and soda pop taste good, but in no way do they constitute a complete nutritious diet. Likewise, maybe your spiritual diet consists of humming a favorite song or contributing to a food bank. Music and food banks are good, but they don’t constitute a complete spiritual diet.

To be truly walking in the Spirit, you must be fed doctrine.

For your new, spiritual nature to be in control of your life, you must consume good, healthy quantities of God’s Word and develop an understanding of what it says.

**A Look in the Book:** Read 1 Timothy 4:11-16. *These things command and teach. Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*

In these verses (written to Timothy), the Apostle Paul stresses the importance of doctrine. Notice he’s addressing Timothy as a youth.

First, Paul tells Timothy to *give attendance to doctrine*. “Attendance” means “devotion of thought and effort.” It’s difficult to devote your thought to doctrine when you only show up for church once a month. It’s difficult to devote your effort to doctrine when your Bible’s lost beneath a pile of motorcycle magazines.

“Giving attention to doctrine” means getting excited about studying the Bible. Why do this?

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The world isn’t interested in helping you walk in the Spirit. It’s full of temptations to get you off the spiritual track. The world even has religions to meet your spiritual needs.

A seminary professor once said, “Christian young people need a defense against the New Age Movement and other counterfeit cults. Where can they get that defense? By studying the Bible and being doctrinally taught.”

In a previous lesson, you read about the very real battle that goes on inside of you. That old, sinful nature wants control. It’s very easy for your sinful nature to get control when you ignore God’s Word. It’s very easy to take a detour from your spiritual walk when you’re ignorant about doctrine.

STUDY THE BIBLE.

KNOW WHAT YOU BELIEVE.

**KEEP ON WALKING ON THE SPIRITUAL TRACK.**



## DAY FIVE — Walking in the Spirit

**TODAY'S PRAYER:** Start each day with prayer. Dedicate yourself to walking according to God's will and not to give into temptation.

**TODAY'S VERSE:** *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24).*

### When Defeat Is Real

"Hey! Come here," Bill called as soon as Aaron closed the front door. "Sean loaned me that fantasy-role-play game book he got last night. Wanta see it?"

"Nah, not right now," Aaron told his brother. "I have a mess of homework I gotta do.

Aaron had a problem. He wanted to walk in the Spirit, and in most areas of his life he felt he succeeded. But he, along with his brother, Bill, and Bill's two friends, were very involved in playing fantasy-role-play games.

Aaron didn't need anyone to tell him it was wrong. In fact, no one DID tell him. Still, Aaron knew that a game shouldn't take up so much time and energy. Sean, especially, got to the point where the game was controlling his life. The others weren't far behind. Besides, it encouraged fooling around with the occult.

*If only I could say 'no' to those guys and hold on to that answer forever!* Aaron thought.

Maybe playing fantasy-role-play games isn't a temptation in your life, but there's something else that is.

If you had to narrow down your biggest sin problem, what would it be?

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Talk to a responsible Christian adult about your problem. Sometimes, just knowing that there's a person who's aware of and praying about your problem can be a help. Perhaps he or she can also give you guidelines from God's Word of which you were unaware.

**A Look in the Book:** Imagine that Aaron came to you with his problem. Look up the following verses and write how these verses relate to Aaron's life. (The first one is done for you.)

Galatians 5:19-20: *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies.*

What the verse says to Aaron: These works are not of the Spirit.

Romans 12:9: *Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*

What the verse says to Aaron: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Romans 13:14: *But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

What the verse says to Aaron: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 Thessalonians 3:6: *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.*

What the verse says to Aaron: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Hopefully, you'd tell Aaron to stay away from his brother and his brother's friends while they're playing with the game. Also, he should get rid of any such game materials he might personally own. On the positive side, Aaron needs to study the Bible and familiarize himself with Scripture concerning the occult. Spending time with friends who daily live their Christianity would also help.

Still, there'll be failure — for Aaron, for you, and for every Christian who desires to walk in the Spirit. You'll be going along just fine, and then, CRASH, you're right back in the muck and mire of sin (Romans 7:24).

What can you do?

1. Don't get discouraged. Since you've "blown it" once, don't decide that you might as well give up altogether (1 Corinthians 10:13).
2. Ask yourself why you failed. Is it because you were hanging around with the wrong kind of friends? Were you some place you shouldn't have been? Were you feeling too confident, thinking you had conquered the problem? (1 Corinthians 10:12).
3. Recognize that the Lord understands. He knows your weaknesses and your struggles. He's there to help (Psalm 103:14; Hebrews 4:16).
4. Immediately talk to the Lord about your sin problem (1 John 2:1-2).
5. Continue in Bible study (1 Peter 2:2).
6. Finally, get up and get going.

**DAY SIX — Walking in the Spirit**

**TODAY'S PRAYER:** Thank the Lord for giving you the Holy Spirit to guide you through His Word in your everyday life.

**TODAY'S VERSE:** *For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting (Galatians 6:8).*

**Results That Are Real**

Angie Taylor sang as she lazily dried the dishes. "But the fruit of the Spirit is ..."

"Come on, Angie! Get a move on it!" yelled Becky. "I gotta get those brownies made. Mom said I had to wait until the dishes were done. I'm gonna be graduated from college before that happens!"

"Don't count on it. You're too dumb even to get into college."

"Oh, grow up!" Becky sat down at the table and gave an exasperated sigh.

Angie picked up another plate and slowly moved the dish towel around the surface. Again she sang, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace ..."

"Annnnggggiiiiieeee!" Becky whined. "I've got to get those brownies made for tomorrow's meeting."

"That's nice." Angie moved even slower. "Longsuffering, gentleness, goodness ..."

"Okay, that does it." Becky went to the kitchen door and screamed, "Mom, make Angie hurry! She's deliberately taking her time, so I can't get the brownies started."

"Look!" Angie threw the dish towel at Becky. "If you're so interested in the dishes getting done, then you do them yourself."

Becky picked up the towel from the floor. "I think I will. They'll never get done if I don't."

Angie knew a lot about the fruit of the Spirit. Because she knew the song, she even had the nine characteristics memorized. She knew very little, however, about walking in the Spirit. If you're truly allowing the Holy Spirit to control your life, there will be results. If you've made the choice to obey your new, spiritual nature, there will be blessings and rewards in your life.

**A Look in the Book: Read Galatians 5:15-26.**

In these verses, you read about two sets of consequences. Paul lists the works of a life lived in the flesh.

List several of these works which stand out to you.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_

In contrast to the works of walking in the flesh, Paul lists fruit of the Spirit.

What are the characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_

Are you walking in the Spirit? Do you see these characteristics in your own life?

Are you joyful when Dad says "no" to using the car Saturday, or your sister spills ketchup on your sweater?

Are you long-suffering when the coach says not this year, but next year you can be on the team?

Are you temperate (self-controlled) if the umpire calls you out when you know for sure you were safe?

If these characteristics aren't part of your daily life, then you'd better think things through.

Ask yourself the following questions, reviewing what it means to walk in the Spirit.

1. Do you have a desire to live by God's Word and the Holy Spirit's guidance, or do you stubbornly attempt to do things your way?
2. Do you understand the working of your old, sinful nature and your new, spiritual nature.
3. Do you get excited about studying God's Word and talking to Him in prayer?
4. When you fail, do you become discouraged, forgetting about the Lord's forgiveness and understanding? Or, do you rely on God's forgiveness and move ahead?

Walk in the Spirit, and let others see the fruit produced in your life.

