

Freedom From Sin Part 3

Living according the Spirit.

Living according to the Spirit is the same as walking in the Light, abiding in Jesus and following Jesus etc. It simply means having a relationship with Jesus by listening to and following the Spirit's voice. In John 10:27 Jesus said, *"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."*

We can see from this verse that there are two things which Jesus' disciples do:

- 1) Listen to His voice and
- 2) Follow Him.

To know how to listen to and follow Jesus, we first need to know how the Spirit 'speaks' to us. John 16:8 tells us, *"When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment."* From this verse we can see that when we sin the Spirit 'speaks' to us by convicting our conscience; He takes our peace away by making us feel guilty. We follow when we respond to this conviction and confess our sin - then our peace returns. This is what is meant by listening to and following Jesus' voice. The fact that the Spirit guides us by controlling our peace is confirmed by Rom. 8:6 which says, *"The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace."* There is no peace in sin, only death, therefore when we lack peace we know that we need to get right with God for one reason or another.

Of course there is a false peace. I heard of a Pastor who said that God told him to leave his wife and marry another woman and I guess he had some sort of peace because he did it. However, any peace that he may have had was false peace because adultery is not Biblical. It goes without saying that the Spirit of God will not give us peace to go against His own Word.

If we faithfully listen to and follow Jesus then we will die to self and be freed from sin. 1 John 1:7 confirms this where it says, *"if we walk in the light ... the blood of Jesus ... purifies us from all sin."* Likewise, 1 John 1:9 tells us that if we confess our sins God will *"purify us from all unrighteousness."* So, God's promise is clear: if we walk in the light and confess our sins then we will be purified from all unrighteousness – we will be freed from slavery to sin.

As mentioned in Part 2, the pathway to dying to self is not easy because our sinful nature wants to continue in sin and it fights against the Spirit's leading to repent (Gal. 5:16-17). Even when we know that we need to repent, we may still tell ourselves, "It's OK, everyone does it anyway," or we may try to convince ourselves that it's just not possible to stop. "I'm only human" is a common excuse but many a Christian has been delivered from the exact same sins that may plague you or I. 1 Cor. 10:13 tells us, *"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man,"* so we are not fighting something unique but something that is common to mankind. And, just like those who have persevered and overcome, we too can overcome through the Divine Power of the Spirit.

The Bible tells us, *"It is God's will that you should be sanctified,"* and that we should *"make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him"* (1 Thess. 4:3 & 2 Pet. 3:14). If we are habitually sinning then we are neither sanctified, spotless or blameless and certainly not at peace with God. Sin is a burden which leaves us without peace but it's Jesus' promise to each and every one of us that, if we come to Him, He will give us rest from our burdens. In Matt. 11:28-30, He said, *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."* There is rest and peace to be found when we live according to the Spirit.

Part 4 will be about the security we have in Christ. Amen.

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