

Lesson 1 Moving with the Spirit

The wind is blowing, but if your sail isn't raised, you won't go far. You can be surrounded by oxygen, but if you don't breathe, it won't do you any good. The sap can be flowing, but if a branch isn't connected to the vine it will wither.

If you don't have kindling and wood in your fire, a lit match won't burn long. It is the same with the Spirit. We are surrounded with the aliveness of the Spirit. All that remains is for us to learn how to let the Spirit, fill, flow and glow within us.

Where do we start? We start in our heart – the wellspring of our desires.

The New Testament gives us a simple image for how desire translates into action: **walking**. When we were newborn, we couldn't even roll over, much less crawl, much less walk and run. Eventually a desire stirred within us and we gradually and clumsily translated that desire into action – first rolling over, then crawling, then standing and toddling and eventually walking. Step by step, with lots of stumbles and falls, eventually mastering the art of translating our desire into movement.

Walking is everywhere in the Scriptures – walk in the Spirit; walk in the light; walk in love; walk in newness of life; walk by faith; walk in good works; walk in truth.

Read: Colossians 3:1-17 Living as those made alive in Christ.

Jesus used another vivid image to convey the same reality: a branch abiding in a vine.

Read: John 15:1-8

If we abide or remain in vital connection to Christ, the Spirit will flow with God's aliveness in and through us, making us both beautiful and fruitful.

If you want to gain practice walking in the Spirit or abiding in Christ, you can start when you wake up tomorrow morning. Before your feet hit the floor, open your heart to the Spirit.

Ask God to help you walk in the Spirit, step by step throughout the day. Ask God to help you abide in the Vine so good fruit will naturally develop in your life. Just starting the day this way will make a difference. At the end of the day, you can look back with gratitude, resting in the Spirit until a new day begins and you continue walking the journey of faith.

What does it mean to Live by the Spirit?

Read: Galatians 5:13-26

Build the habit of yielding to the Spirit throughout the day. Offer yourself to God – here I am Lord, please move in and through me to bless others.

Whenever an emergency or challenge arises, you can lean on the Spirit. When you sense that you have let something other than God's Spirit fill you and direct you – anger, fear, prejudice, lust, greed, anxiety, pride, inferiority or rivalry, for example – you can stop, acknowledge your misstep and re-surrender to the Spirit.

It is like breathing – exhaling an acknowledgement of your misstep and inhaling forgiveness and strength to start walking the Spirit again.

What is your terrain like at the moment – deep valleys, slippery trails, uphill climbs, swampy patches, dangerous places? Or is it filled with beautiful valleys, peaceful places where you can breathe free?

Through it all, we need patience, endurance and perseverance so that no matter what happens, we'll keep putting one foot ahead of the other.

How fit are you? Sadly, lots of people get distracted and lose their way. Instead of continuing to walk in the Spirit, they slow down to look back proudly on how far they've come. They become highly impressed by all they have learned and pretty soon, they come to a standstill and brag about themselves, comparing themselves to others who haven't walked as far or fast or cleverly as they have.

Pretty soon they are so out of shape they give up walking altogether and specialise in talking about the way others walk.

That is their choice of course. But I encourage you to keep walking. Keep on the road. Although we each have come a long way – there is still more to explore up ahead. The Spirit is on the move, so let us keep moving too.

As a community we can share our stories of how the Spirit guided, empowered, inspired, restrained, sustained and trained us in the fine art of aliveness. We share our joys and sorrows. We share mistakes we have made and falls we have taken and lessons we have learned. Through this sharing, we encourage each other.

Engage:

What one thought or idea from this lesson intrigued, provoked, disturbed, challenged or encouraged you?

How do you respond to the warning about losing your way and becoming a critical bystander rather than a humble walker?

Have you ever walked in the forest? If so, did you learn anything along the track?

Activate:

This week aim to 'CHECK IN' with the Spirit each morning and evening and several times throughout the day. And look for opportunities to share stories of what the Spirit is doing in your life.

Mediate:

Hold the image of a ship raising its sail to the wind. Ponder what it would mean for you to raise your sail to the Holy Spirit. Let a prayer arise within you.

Rev Judi encourages you to share your thoughts and questions from this lesson. She is willing to chat to you over the phone on any questions.

Or you can email these to our email group, which I will set up. I can also provide these in hard copy to those that do not have email access.