

LIVING IN THE SPIRIT

GOLDEN TEXT

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness”. (Galatians 5:22)

USEFUL PRACTICE

Spiritual revival brings a reality of life in the Spirit.

SCRIPTURE READING

Galatians 5:19-25

19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;

20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions

21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

I – To highlight what walking in the Spirit means and its importance for leading a spiritual life.

II – To point out the aspects that involve the confrontation between the flesh and the Spirit.

III – To emphasize the gifts and the Fruit of the Spirit as essential attributes for Christian life and character.

INTRODUCTION

The saved in Christ Jesus, as soon as they have accepted Jesus as their only and sufficient Savior, can go through different situations in their lives to experience spiritual revival. The Christian life is a spiritual journey that begins on the day of conversion and continues until death, if the person stands firm to the end (Matt. 10:22). In their spiritual walk, believers need to remain faithful, living according to the will of God. To do so, it is necessary to walk in the Spirit.

I – Life in the Spirit.

1. Walking in the Spirit. In the Bible, the verb to walk has the figurative sense of living, experiencing, practicing and leading in the spiritual life. Therefore, Paul writes, “I say, however, Walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the concupiscence of the flesh” (Gal. 5.16). Walking in the Spirit, with a capital “S”, has a very high and deep spiritual meaning. It is having a Christian life under the direction of the Holy Spirit, based on the dictates of the Holy Word of God. It is having a spiritually revived life (Rom. 8:1).

2. Why walk in the Spirit? Believers in Jesus must walk according to the Holy Spirit in order not to gratify the desires of their carnal nature (Gal. 5.16). Writing to the Romans, the apostle Paul said: “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:1,2). Therefore, walking in the Spirit, the saved have victory over the empire of sin and death.

3. How to walk in the Spirit? It is not easy to walk in the Spirit. Unfortunately, the inclination of our carnal nature, inherited from our ancestors, inherent in all human beings, makes us pursue things that are not pleasing to God. When people accept Christ as Savior, they become new creatures, through the salvific process of the New Birth (John 3:3; 2

Cor. 5:17). However, they need to cultivate a spiritual and persevering relationship with God. Therefore, for believers to walk in the Spirit, they need to have the Holy Spirit within them (John 14:17); be led by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14); be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

II - The Confrontation between the Flesh and the Spirit

1. Flesh vs. Spirit. In spiritual terms, it is the greatest struggle of the saved believer's life. Carnal nature, inherited from Adam, is nourished by the lust of the flesh. It leans towards the sinful structures created by the devil in order to drive human beings away from God. Hence, the apostle John wrote, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world" (1 John 2:15, 16). Unfortunately, many people do not want to know about God. They are seduced and driven away from God through various instruments: through false religions, humanism, materialism, etc. As a result, people forget God and seek to please the devil and their own fleshly nature, corrupted by sin. No wonder, the apostle Paul warned about this confrontation between the flesh and the Spirit (Gal. 5:16, 17).

2. The works of the flesh. In biblical terms, from Greek *sarx*, "flesh" means the fallen nature of man, whose inclination is to practice what does not please God. Thus, "the works of the flesh", according to the Epistle to the Galatians, are the practices, attitudes and thoughts contrary to the holiness required by God for those who are faithful to the Word. Identified in at least 15 types, without closing the list, as the biblical author adds "and things similar to these", these works can be divided into several categories: unlawful sexual practices (5:19); religious practices (5:20a); bad human relationships (5:20b; 21) and vices and bad habits (5:21). The apostle Paul closes this part of the Letter by saying "that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:21; cf. 1Cor. 6:9).

III - Revival by the Fruit of the Spirit

1. The Fruit of the Spirit. Gifts and Fruit of the Spirit are essential characteristics of Christian life and character. The use of spiritual gifts, without the practice of the Fruit of the Spirit, can only be a demonstration of selfishness and exhibitionism. Not all Christians have been endowed with spiritual gifts, but all of them should experience and witness the Fruit of the Spirit in their lives. Christians cannot bear good witness without the unity of the Fruit of the Spirit: they cannot have love without having faith; they cannot have joy and not have kindness, goodness or self-control (Gal. 5:22, 23). One aspect of the fruit cannot be dissociated from the other. We

can use the example of a fruit, such as an orange, which has several sections, but it is only one fruit.

2. The nine aspects of the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). In the Bible, love (or charity) (Gr. *agape*) is more than philanthropy, because it means true love as a synonym of *agape* love, the love of God in the human heart (Phil. 1:9; 1 John 4:7-8,16); joy (Gr. *chara*) is the joy produced by the Holy Spirit (Luke 8:13; Phil. 1:4); peace (Gr. *eirene*) is “the peace of God, which transcends all understanding”(Phil. 4:7); forbearance (Gr. *anoché*) is patience to endure adversity, the weaknesses of others (Eph. 4:2; 2Tim. 3:10; Heb. 12:1); kindness (Gr. *chréstotés*) is the quality of someone who is benevolent, kind, yielding, forgiving (Eph. 4:32); goodness (gr. *agathosune*) refers to one who is good (Matt. 12:35; Eph. 5:9; Ps 37:23); faithfulness (Gr. *pistis*) is not about natural faith, but the one that is produced by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who believe in God, according to the Scriptures (John 7:38; Rom. 1:17; 3:28; Heb. 11:6); gentleness (Gr. *praus*) refers to the one who is meek, synonymous with “mildness, affable character, calm, docile” (Matt. 5:5; 1Tim. 6:11); self-control (Gr. *egkrateia*) means temperance, *self-restraint*, it is the highest aspect of the relationship with others, with different situations and facts in life (Titus 1:8; 2 Pet. 1:6).

3. Against the Fruit of the Spirit there is no law. Paul's conclusion about the Fruit of the Spirit is remarkable. He states incisively and categorically, “Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit” (Gal. 5:23-25). May God help us to cultivate the Fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Spiritual gifts are only valuable if they are accompanied by the Fruit of the Spirit. This means living in the fullness of the Spirit, having a truly revived life.

CONCLUSION

Revived believers benefit from great blessings from God, for they walk in the Spirit, and do not walk according to the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:16). In addition to spiritual gifts, they have the Fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Gal 5:22). Therefore, God bestows blessings in abundance upon believers who walk and live in the Spirit: “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.” (Eph. 1:3).