

LED BY THE SPIRIT

November Devotional

THEME: AN ENDURING HOUSE — BUILT BY HIS SPIRIT.

Key Scripture for the month

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

— Galatians 5:25 (NIV)

Those Who Are Built by the Spirit Are Led by the Spirit.

WELCOME TO THE MONTH

You can't build a lasting house on human strength alone. That's the big idea behind our theme, An Enduring House — Built by His Spirit. God's work gets done by God's Spirit.

Zechariah 4:6 puts it simply: “"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the LORD Almighty.”

God first spoke those words to Zerubbabel. He was trying to rebuild the temple while facing opposition, discouragement and problems that looked far too big. God's message was clear: this won't be finished by your resource, your skills or your effort. It will be finished by My Spirit.

The same is true for us. We can make plans, start ministries and run good programs. Those things matter. But without the Holy Spirit leading and empowering us, even our best efforts can turn into us just trying hard, instead of joining in with what God is doing.

So here's the question for this month: ***If we believe the Spirit is building us, are we also letting the Spirit lead us?***

Paul says it this way in Galatians 5:25: "Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit." Notice the link. The Spirit who gave us new life is the same Spirit we now walk with, step by step. He didn't just start our journey with Jesus. He carries us, strengthens us and guides us all the way.

Over the next four weeks we'll look at four parts of a Spirit-led life:

- **Week 1 —** Submitted to the Spirit: letting go of our own way and saying yes to God's.
- **Week 2 —** Strengthened by the Spirit: finding His power when we feel weak.
- **Week 3 —** Moved by the Spirit: learning to notice His leading and follow it with courage.
- **Week 4 —** Governed by the Spirit: letting His truth and character shape how we think, choose and live.

These aren't four steps you complete one after another. They work together, and they all grow as we give more of our lives to God.

Our hope is simple. We don't want to be a church that just talks about the Holy Spirit. We want to be people who actually walk with Him.

OUR PRAYER FOR THIS MONTH

Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of Your Holy Spirit, who lives in us and leads us into the truth about Jesus. Teach us to let go of our own ways, lean on Your strength, follow Your direction and live under Your authority. Make our lives look more like Jesus. Build our church into an enduring house, built and led by Your Spirit.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

READER GUIDANCE

This devotional is here to help you grow closer to God as the Holy Spirit works in your life. The goal isn't just to know more about the Bible. It's to become more surrendered, more obedient and more like Jesus.

You can use it on your own, with your family, in a small group, with a ministry team, or over coffee with a friend.

Each week follows the same simple pattern:

1. Read the Scriptures. Start with the anchor passage and think about what was going on at the time.
2. Read the Story. Notice what the Bible story shows us about God.
3. Reflect. Let the reading challenge your attitudes, assumptions and choices.
4. Keep Jesus at the Centre. The Holy Spirit always leads us closer to Jesus.
5. Pray. Bring what you've noticed to God honestly.
6. Put It into Practice. Choose one practical way to obey what you've read.

Come to each week prayerfully, with your Bible open and a willing heart.

WEEK ONE: SUBMITTED TO THE SPIRIT — THE POSTURE OF SURRENDER

ANCHOR SCRIPTURE/S

Galatians 5:16–18 (NIV)

> *"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[a] you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law."*

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES

- Romans 12:1–2
- Luke 22:42
- James 4:7

INTRODUCTION: BEFORE WE CAN FOLLOW, WE HAVE TO LET GO

For most of us, the hardest part of following Jesus isn't working out what God wants. It's being willing to give up what we want.

We like being in control. We make plans, we have our preferences, and we have a picture of how life should go. Even as Christians, we can get so used to running our own lives that we end up asking God to bless our plans instead of asking Him for His. But the Christian life was never meant to be lived on our own.

In Galatians 5:16, Paul tells us to walk by the Spirit so we won't give in to the desires of the flesh. He says the flesh and the Spirit pull against each other. "The flesh" doesn't just mean our bodies. It means the part of us that wants to live without God and do things our own way.

That's why surrender matters. We can't truly follow the Spirit while we hang on to the steering wheel. Surrender isn't weakness, and it doesn't mean we stop taking responsibility. It means we admit that God knows more than we do, that His plans are better than our ambitions, and that His ways can be trusted more than ours.

A surrendered heart says, "Lord, I'll follow You, even when You lead me somewhere I wouldn't choose."

THE STORY: JESUS IN THE GARDEN

Read Luke 22:39–46

The night before He was crucified, Jesus went to the Mount of Olives to pray. He knew what was coming: betrayal, suffering and death. Luke tells us He was in deep anguish.

Then Jesus prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42).

Jesus didn't pretend it was easy. He was honest about how heavy it was. But right in the middle of that pain, He chose the Father's will.

His surrender wasn't the absence of struggle. It was obedience in the struggle.

And Jesus wasn't giving in because He had no power. He gave Himself up because He completely trusted the Father and was fully committed to saving us. His life shows that real spiritual authority doesn't come from being independent of God. It comes from obeying Him.

The garden also reminds us that surrender can cost us something. Sometimes what God wants lines up with what we want. Other times, obeying Him means letting go of something we'd rather keep.

For Jesus, surrender led to the cross. And His obedience did what no human effort ever could.

REFLECTION: WANTING GOD'S BLESSING VS WANTING HIS WILL

It's possible to believe in the Holy Spirit, and even serve faithfully at church, while still keeping some parts of life off-limits to Him.

- We ask for His guidance when we're unsure, but go with our own judgement when we feel confident.
- We pray for God to open doors, but struggle to accept it when He closes one.

That's why surrender can't be a one-off moment. It has to become the ongoing attitude of our hearts.

Romans 12:1–2 calls us to offer ourselves to God as living sacrifices, and to be changed by the renewing of our minds. Paul says we do this because of God's mercy. We don't give ourselves to God to earn His love. We give ourselves because we've already received His grace through Jesus.

As we surrender, the Holy Spirit gets to work. He renews how we think, reshapes what we want, and helps us see what pleases God.

Surrender might come easily in some parts of life and be a real fight in others. Maybe it's someone you're finding hard to forgive. Maybe it's a decision you don't want to rethink, a dream you don't want to let go of, or a habit you've never really dealt with.

The Holy Spirit doesn't point these out to shame you. He's inviting you into deeper obedience and real freedom in Christ.

Surrender starts when we stop asking God to approve our plans and start being willing to follow His.

Questions to think about:

- Are there areas of my life where I ask for God's blessing but don't want to give Him control?
- How do I usually react when God's Word challenges what I want or how I'm living?
- What step of obedience might the Holy Spirit be asking me to take this week?

JESUS AT THE CENTRE: HE SHOWS US HOW AND HE MAKES IT POSSIBLE

Jesus isn't just our example of surrender. He's the reason we can be close to God at all. Through His obedience, death and resurrection, He brought us back to the Father and made it possible for us to receive the Holy Spirit.

Where we've failed to obey, Jesus stayed faithful. Where our surrender has been half-hearted, His was complete. And where our strength runs out, His grace keeps us going.

Philippians 2:5–8 tells us that Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient, even to death on a cross. His example challenges our pride. His sacrifice gives us the confidence to come to God honestly, weaknesses and all.

The more we understand how much Jesus loves us, the easier it becomes to trust Him with our lives.

PRAYER

Personal Prayer — Heavenly Father, I admit there are times I've chosen my own understanding and desires over Your direction. Forgive me for the ways I've resisted Your Word and leaned on my own strength.
Holy Spirit, search my heart. Show me the areas I haven't fully given to You. Give me humility to be corrected, wisdom to recognise Your leading, and courage to obey when the way forward is hard.

Lord Jesus, thank You for obeying the Father perfectly and for making new life possible through Your sacrifice. Teach me to follow You, not in my own strength, but by the power of Your Spirit. Help me say more and more, "Not my will, but Yours be done." In Jesus' name, Amen

For Our Leaders — Pray that our pastors, elders, ministry leaders and volunteers stay humble and sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Ask God to help them tell the difference between personal ambition and His purposes, to give them courage for hard decisions, and to keep them united as they seek His direction for our church.

For Our Church and Community — Pray that our church will be known for humility, obedience and a real responsiveness to the Holy Spirit. Ask God to help us let go of personal preferences where they get in the way of unity. Pray too for families and people in our community facing hard decisions, that they would find God's wisdom, peace and grace.

LIVING IT OUT: A WILLING HEART

A Spirit-led life starts when we recognise that our lives belong to Jesus.

We won't always understand what God is doing, and obedience won't always feel easy. But we can trust the One who's leading us. Surrender doesn't mean losing who you are or becoming passive. It means finding freedom by living in step with the God who made you, saved you and knows what's best for you.

This week: Pick one area where you've been reluctant to give God control. Bring it to Him in prayer. Look at what the Bible says about it. Talk to someone wise if you need to. Then ask yourself what faithful obedience would look like.

Before we can keep in step with the Spirit, we need hearts that are willing to let go.

Kingdom principle: A life led by the Spirit begins with a heart surrendered to God.

WEEK TWO: STRENGTHENED BY THE SPIRIT — THE POWER OF HIS PRESENCE

ANCHOR SCRIPTURE/S

Ephesians 3:16–19 (NIV)

> *"16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."*

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES

- Romans 8:11
- 2 Corinthians 12:7–10
- Isaiah 40:29–31

INTRODUCTION: STRENGTH BEYOND OUR OWN

Sooner or later, every Christian learns this: knowing what's right and having the strength to do it are two different things. We really want to follow Jesus. But we still battle discouragement, temptation, uncertainty and the daily grind. We know we should be patient, forgiving and faithful, yet we often run out of strength to keep it up. Even people who've walked with God for decades go through weak seasons.

The good news is that the Christian life was never meant to run on willpower. Last week we talked about surrendering to the Holy Spirit. But surrender doesn't mean God then leaves us to do His will on our own. The Spirit who calls us to surrender is the same Spirit who strengthens us to obey.

In Ephesians 3, Paul prays for believers to be strengthened with power through the Spirit in their "inner being." Notice what he doesn't pray for. He doesn't ask for easier circumstances, more resources or a smoother life. He asks God to make them strong on the inside.

Spiritual strength isn't just the ability to get through hard times. It's staying rooted in Jesus, faithful to His Word and open to His purposes, whatever we're facing.

The Holy Spirit doesn't promise to remove every problem. He gives us power to stay faithful through them.

THE STORY: PAUL & THORN

Read 2 Corinthians 12:7–10

Paul knew hardship well. Over the years he faced opposition, persecution, prison, physical suffering and personal pain. Being called by God didn't make him immune to weakness.

In 2 Corinthians 12, Paul talks about a "thorn in my flesh." We don't know exactly what it was, but it clearly caused him a lot of distress. Three times he begged God to take it away.

Paul had seen God do miracles. He had preached boldly and watched lives change. Surely, without this thorn, he could serve God even better? God's answer wasn't what Paul expected: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

God didn't remove the weakness. Instead, He promised that His grace would be enough, and that His power would show up through Paul's limits. He realised his usefulness to God didn't depend on his weakness or strength. It depended on God's grace being enough. As a result, his weakness and pain didn't drive him to despair but deeper trust in God.

He summed it up in verse 10: "For when I am weak, then I am strong."

Paul wasn't saying suffering is good in itself, or that we shouldn't pray for relief. He had prayed hard for relief himself. He was saying that weakness doesn't get the final word. Our limits don't limit God.

REFLECTION: HUMAN STRENGTH VS SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

Our culture prizes independence, confidence, achievement and self-reliance. From a young age we're told to be stronger, more capable and more resilient. Those things aren't bad. The Bible doesn't discourage hard work or discipline. But there's a big difference between developing our abilities and depending on them as the source of our spiritual life.

Human strength runs out. Our energy drains. Our emotions get overwhelmed. Our understanding has gaps. Even our strongest convictions get shaken when life gets hard. The Holy Spirit gives us something willpower can't: God's own strength working inside us.

In Ephesians 3:16–19, Paul links this inner strength with Christ living in our hearts by faith, and with us grasping how deep His love is. That's important. The Spirit's strength isn't mainly about getting more done or reaching our goals. It's power that roots us more deeply in our relationship with Jesus.

As He strengthens us, we learn to keep going without giving in to despair, to forgive when bitterness feels easier, to stay faithful when obedience costs us, and to trust God when we can't see the way ahead.

So spiritual strength doesn't always look dramatic. Sometimes it looks like:

- a believer who keeps trusting God through disappointment
- a tired parent who keeps loving and caring for their family
- someone who chooses forgiveness instead of payback
- a volunteer who keeps serving faithfully when no one notices

These look ordinary. But they can be signs of the extraordinary work of God's Spirit in a human heart.

Strengthened From the Inside

Paul prays specifically for strength in our "inner being." God's work often starts below the surface.

We might be asking God to change what's happening around us, while He's busy changing what's happening inside us. He grows patience where we've been impatient, courage where we've been afraid, and perseverance where we've wanted to quit.

This doesn't mean we no longer need rest, wise advice, practical help or the support of others. God often gives His grace through the care and encouragement of other believers. And being strengthened by the Spirit doesn't mean we'll never feel tired, discouraged or vulnerable.

Spiritual strength isn't pretending we're not human. It's God's presence holding us up in our humanity.

We're not called to be strong enough without God. We're called to depend on the God whose strength is enough for us.

Questions to think about

- Where have I been relying mostly on my own ability, determination or experience instead of depending on the Holy Spirit?
- How might God be building strength in me through a current struggle or season of uncertainty?
- What would it look like to lean more on the Spirit's strength in my relationships, responsibilities and service?

JESUS AT THE CENTRE: STRENGTH THROUGH DEPENDENCE

Jesus showed us that a Spirit-empowered life isn't independent from the Father. It's completely dependent on Him. At the start of His ministry, Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness (Luke 4:1). After His testing there, He came back to Galilee "in the power of the Spirit" (Luke 4:14).

Yet the clearest display of God's strength came at what looked like His weakest moment: the cross. Jesus willingly suffered and died to carry out the Father's plan to save us. What looked like defeat became the way God brought salvation to the world. And through the resurrection, God declared that Jesus had won over sin and death.

That same Jesus now invites us to stay close to Him. We don't become strong by trying harder to be like Jesus. We grow strong through our ongoing relationship with Him, as the Holy Spirit works in us. That's why Paul's prayer links the Spirit's strength with Christ living in our hearts.

The Spirit doesn't just strengthen us to do more for Jesus. He strengthens us to be more deeply rooted in Jesus.

When we're tired, we can turn to Him. When we're unsure, we can trust His wisdom. When we hit our limits, we can admit we need His grace. And when obedience feels beyond us, we can depend on the Spirit who keeps working in us.

PRAYER

Personal Prayer — Heavenly Father, thank You that my weakness doesn't limit Your strength, and that Your grace is enough for every season of my life. Forgive me for the times I've relied on my own understanding and effort without seeing how much I need You. Holy Spirit, strengthen me in my inner being. Renew my faith when I'm discouraged. Root my heart in the love of Christ. Give me courage to stay faithful when the road gets hard. Teach me that real strength isn't found in doing it myself, but in depending on You every day.

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your obedience, Your sacrifice and the new life Your resurrection brings. Let Your strength be seen through my weakness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

For Our Leaders — Pray that our pastors, elders, ministry leaders and volunteers would be strengthened by the Holy Spirit in their personal lives, families and ministries. Ask God to refresh those who are weary and encourage those who are discouraged. Pray that they won't measure success by activity or results, but by faithfulness to God's call. May they serve from the strength of God's presence, not the pressure of other people's expectations.

For Our Church and Community — Pray for people and families in our church who are facing emotional, relational, financial or physical challenges. Ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen the weary, comfort the grieving and hold up those facing uncertainty. Pray for those serving in our church's ministries and community outreach, that they would be renewed in strength, compassion and perseverance. May people find in our church not only practical care, but the presence and grace of Jesus.

LIVING IT OUT: A WILLING HEART

There's real freedom in realising God never asked you to keep the Christian life going on your own strength. He calls you to be faithful, and He gives you His Spirit to make it possible.

Your weaknesses don't disqualify you from being used by God. They can become the very places where you learn to depend on His grace.

This week: Think of an area where you feel inadequate, worn out or overwhelmed. Instead of only asking God to remove the problem, ask Him to strengthen you in it. Spend time in His Word, be honest with Him in prayer, and be open to the help He sends through other people.

Remember, the Spirit's strength doesn't always mean things change straight away. Sometimes the greatest sign of His power is a heart that stays faithful, hopeful and anchored in Jesus, no matter what.

Kingdom principle: The strength of a Spirit-led life isn't found in being enough on our own, but in depending on God's presence and power every day.

WEEK THREE: MOVED BY THE SPIRIT — THE COURAGE TO FOLLOW

ANCHOR SCRIPTURE/S

Acts 8:26–40 (NIV)

"26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." 27 So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopianeu nuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means "queen of the Ethiopians"). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. 29 The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. 31 "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

32 This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

33 In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth."

34 The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" 35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

36 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" 38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. 40 Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea."

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES

- Acts 13:1–4
- Romans 8:14
- John 16:13

INTRODUCTION: WHEN THE SPIRIT LEADS, FAITH RESPONDS

Believing God has a plan for your life is one thing. Being willing to move when He points you toward it is another.

We pray for guidance all the time. We ask God to open doors and show us the way. But when an opportunity comes that pushes us out of our comfort zone, messes with our plans or asks us to step out in faith, we often hesitate. Sometimes it's because we're unsure. Sometimes it's fear, inconvenience, or just wanting things to stay familiar.

All through the Bible, God works through ordinary people who make themselves available. They rarely see the whole picture first. Usually they just take the next faithful step.

The Spirit strengthens us on the inside. But that strength isn't just for us to feel better or hold on. *The Spirit strengthens us inwardly so we can respond to God outwardly.*

Philip's story in Acts 8 shows us that Spirit-led living isn't always about big moments or large ministries. Sometimes it starts with one act of obedience, one conversation, or simply turning up where God is already at work.

The question isn't whether the Holy Spirit can lead us. It's whether we're willing to follow.

THE STORY: PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN OFFICIAL

Read Acts 8:26–40

Philip was one of seven men chosen in Acts 6 to help care for the practical needs of the early church. When persecution scattered the believers from Jerusalem, Philip went to Samaria and preached about Jesus. God moved powerfully, and the whole city was filled with joy. Then something unexpected happened. An angel told Philip to head south to the desert road between Jerusalem and Gaza. That must have seemed strange. Philip was in the middle of a fruitful ministry with crowds of people, and now he was being sent to a quiet road, without being told why.

But the Bible simply says: Philip started out. On the road he met an Ethiopian official heading home after worshipping in Jerusalem. This man was in charge of the treasury of the queen of Ethiopia. As he rode in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

The Holy Spirit told Philip to go up to the chariot. Philip did, and heard the man reading. He asked, "Do you understand what you're reading?" The official admitted he needed someone to explain it. So Philip climbed in, and starting with Isaiah 53, he told him the good news about Jesus. Further along they came to some water, and the official asked to be baptised. Philip baptised him. The official went on his way rejoicing, and the Spirit took Philip somewhere else to keep preaching.

This story shows us a few things about being moved by the Spirit:

- Philip was willing to leave a fruitful, familiar place when God said go.
- He obeyed before he understood the full picture.
- His obedience put him in the path of someone God had already been preparing.
- Philip didn't have to make something happen. He just joined in with what God was already doing.

What mattered wasn't the size of the opportunity. It was Philip's faithfulness.

The same is true for us. We may never know how God will use a conversation, a kind act, an encouraging word or a simple choice to obey.

But when we make ourselves available, ordinary moments can become places of extraordinary grace.

REFLECTION: NOTICING AND FOLLOWING THE SPIRIT'S LEAD

How do we actually recognise the Holy Spirit's leading?

Some people think being moved by the Spirit is mostly about dramatic experiences or supernatural signs. The Bible does record times when God led people in remarkable ways. But the New Testament also shows the Spirit working through renewed minds, the truth of God's Word, growing Christlike character and the wisdom that comes with maturity.

So being led by the Spirit isn't about waiting around for something unusual to happen. It's about living a life that's more and more tuned in to God's Word, sensitive to His purposes, and willing to obey what Hes already shown us.

Galatians 5:25 calls us to keep in step with the Spirit. That's an everyday rhythm, not an occasional burst of enthusiasm.

Available Before Able

Philip didn't know every detail before he set off. He just responded to what he'd been told.
We often hold back because we feel inadequate or unprepared, or because we're unsure how it will turn out. We assume God can only use us once we have enough knowledge, experience, confidence or resources. But again and again in Scripture, God works through people who know their limits and trust Him anyway.

Preparation and planning still matter. But our limits shouldn't become our excuse for not obeying. Sometimes the first step is simply saying, "Lord, I'm available."

Obedience in Everyday Life

Not every Spirit-led step will look impressive. You might feel prompted to encourage someone who's struggling, help a family in need, fix a broken relationship, or share your faith with someone searching for hope.

These things might seem small, but they can matter for eternity. The Holy Spirit isn't just steering us toward big achievements. He's growing the heart and compassion of Jesus in us.

A Spirit-led life isn't necessarily a busy life, either. Sometimes the Spirit says act. Other times faithful obedience means waiting, listening, holding back, or staying committed to what He's already given us. What matters isn't how busy we are. It's whether we're responsive to God.

Test What You Hear

Wanting to be led by the Spirit comes with a responsibility. Not every thought, feeling or impression is from Him.

The Holy Spirit will never contradict Scripture or lead us away from the character and teaching of Jesus. God has given us His Word, the wisdom of mature believers and the ability to discern prayerfully. So we test what we think is spiritual direction, rather than assuming every strong feeling comes from God. That's especially important when our decisions affect other people.

Real Spirit-led living produces humility, wisdom, love and accountability.

It doesn't produce impulsiveness, spiritual pride or an unwillingness to be corrected. The Spirit doesn't ask us to switch off good judgement. He renews it.

Questions to think about

- Have I held back from serving, encouraging or obeying God because of fear, inconvenience or uncertainty?
- How can I become more aware of the Spirit's leading while staying grounded in Scripture and wise counsel?
- Is there a person, situation or responsibility where God might be asking me to take a step of faith?

JESUS AT THE CENTRE: FOLLOWING THE SPIRIT MEANS FOLLOWING JESUS

Jesus is the perfect picture of a life lived in step with the Father and in the power of the Spirit.

His ministry was marked by compassion, truth and obedience, and by a willingness to stop for people others ignored. He didn't just do what the crowds expected or chase recognition. He stayed committed to the Father's purposes.

In John 4, Jesus met a Samaritan woman at a well. What started as an ordinary conversation became a life-changing moment. Jesus crossed social and cultural barriers to offer her the living water only He could give.

His example reminds us that God's purposes often show up when we're willing to notice and respond to the people around us.

But Jesus is more than our example. Through His death and resurrection, He brought us back to God and made it possible for His people to receive the Holy Spirit. And the Spirit never draws attention away from Jesus. He points to Jesus, reveals His truth and forms His character in us (John 16:13–14).

Being moved by the Spirit is never just about chasing impressions or experiences. It's about being led into deeper obedience to Jesus and a bigger part in His mission. As we follow, our lives should look more and more like His: loving, humble, holy and full of compassion.

PRAYER

Personal Prayer — Heavenly Father, thank You that You haven't left me to find my way through life alone. Forgive me for the times I've let fear, uncertainty, comfort or my own preferences stop me from responding to You.

Holy Spirit, give me a heart that notices Your leading and is willing to obey. Help me see the chances You give me to serve others and show the love of Jesus. Give me wisdom to recognise Your direction through Scripture, prayer and godly advice. Protect me from mistaking my own desires for Your voice.

Lord Jesus, make me available. Give me courage to take the next step, even when I can't see the whole road. In Jesus' name, Amen.

For Our Leaders — Pray that our pastors, elders and ministry leaders would be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and quick to obey. Ask God to give them courage to follow His lead into new opportunities, wisdom to test what they sense against His Word, and humility to seek counsel from others. May they lead by example as people who are available to God.

For Our Church and Community — Pray that our church would be full of ordinary people willing to say, "Lord, I'm available." Ask the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to the people around us, at work, at school, in our streets and in our families, who are searching for hope. Pray for open doors to share the good news about Jesus, and for courage to walk through them.

LIVING IT OUT: TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Philip didn't need the whole plan. He needed to start walking.

The same Spirit who led Philip down that desert road is leading you today. He may not send you to a chariot, but He will put people and opportunities in your path. The question is whether you'll notice, and whether you'll move.

This week: Ask the Holy Spirit each morning to show you one person you can encourage, help or pray for. When someone comes to mind, test it against Scripture, and then act on it. It might be a message, a meal, a phone call or a conversation. Keep it simple, and keep it faithful.

You don't have to make something happen. You just have to be available to what God is already doing.

Kingdom principle: A Spirit-led life is marked not by how much we understand, but by our willingness to follow when He leads.

WEEK FOUR: GOVERNED BY THE SPIRIT — A LIFE UNDER HIS RULE

ANCHOR SCRIPTURE/S

IRomans 8:5–14 (NIV)

> *"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. 7 The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. 8 Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.*
> *9 You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. 10 But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life[a] because of righteousness. 11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of[b] his Spirit who lives in you.*
> *12 Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. 13 For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. 14 For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.*
> *"*

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES

- Galatians 5:13–25
- John 16:13–15
- Acts 2:1–41
- Colossians 3:1–17

INTRODUCTION: WHO'S REALLY IN CHARGE?

Everyone is shaped by something. Our thoughts, attitudes and choices are shaped by what we value, what we chase and whose voices we listen to. For some people that's ambition, culture, past hurts, fear, insecurity or the need to be accepted.

Even as Christians, these things can quietly run the show. We can believe in God, go to church and serve in ministry, yet still make most of our decisions based on what we prefer rather than what God says.

So here's the question: **What actually governs the way you think, choose and live?**

So far this month we've looked at surrendering to the Spirit, being strengthened by Him, and being moved by Him. Now we go deeper. The Holy Spirit doesn't just want our attention when we pray, our dependence when we're weak, or our obedience when an opportunity comes up. He wants to bring all of our life under the lordship of Jesus.

In Romans 8, Paul compares two completely different ways to live: a mind governed by the flesh, and a mind governed by the Spirit. This isn't just good behaviour versus bad behaviour. It's about the direction our whole life is facing. The flesh pulls us toward living without God. The Spirit gives us new life and points us toward Jesus.

Being governed by the Spirit doesn't mean losing your personality or your responsibility. It means finding freedom by lining your life up with the One who made you and saved you.

THE STORY: PETER, FROM OVERCONFIDENT TO SPIRIT-FILLED

Read Luke 22:31–34, 54–62; John 21:15–19; Acts 2:1–41

Peter was one of Jesus' closest friends. He was passionate, brave, and often quick to speak or act. His love for Jesus was real, but his confidence sometimes ran ahead of his understanding. The night before the crucifixion, Peter boldly told Jesus he was ready to go to prison, and even to die, with Him. But Jesus knew Peter's faith was about to be tested.

Within hours, people recognised Peter as one of Jesus' followers. Fear took over, and he denied knowing Jesus three times. When the rooster crowed, Peter remembered what Jesus had said. He went outside and wept bitterly. It was a crushing moment for a man who thought he'd never let Jesus down.

But that wasn't the end of Peter's story. After the resurrection, Jesus met Peter and gently restored him. In John 21, Jesus asked him three times, "Do you love me?" and then gave him a job: take care of My people. Peter's future wouldn't be defined by his failure, but by the grace of Jesus.

Then came Pentecost. In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples, just as Jesus had promised. Peter, the same man who had denied Jesus in front of a few people, now stood before a huge crowd and boldly preached about Jesus' death, resurrection and victory. He called people to turn back to God and pointed them to forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit. About three thousand people responded and were baptised that day.

What changed? Peter had met the risen Jesus, received His grace, and been filled with the Spirit. The man who once relied on his own confidence was learning to depend on God.

That doesn't mean Peter was perfect from then on. Later, in Galatians 2, Paul had to confront him for behaviour that didn't match the gospel.

Spirit-filled people still have to keep growing in humility and obedience.

But Peter's life shows us that our past failures don't have to decide our future, and our natural personality doesn't have to steer our life. Through Jesus' grace and the Spirit's work, we can become people who reflect God's purposes.

REFLECTION: FROM NOW AND THEN TO EVERY DAY

Think about this:

- We ask for His guidance on big decisions, but don't give Him much say over our everyday attitudes.
- We pray for His strength in hard times, but let resentment, pride, impatience or fear decide how we treat people.
- We welcome His presence in worship, but push back when He convicts us about our behaviour.

Romans 8 calls us to something deeper. Paul says that people who live by the flesh "set their minds" on what the flesh wants, while people who live by the Spirit set their minds on what the Spirit wants. To "set your mind" is about where your thinking, interests and desires are pointed: what grabs your attention, shapes your priorities and drives your choices.

Being governed by the Spirit isn't only about avoiding sin. It's letting God renew how we see ourselves, our relationships and the world.

How We Think Shapes How We Live

What we keep thinking about shapes our attitudes, and our attitudes shape our choices.

- If fear runs our thinking, we'll struggle to trust God.
- If pride runs it, we'll struggle to accept correction.
- If resentment runs it, forgiveness gets harder and harder.

As God's Word and the Holy Spirit renew our minds, we start seeing life differently. We learn to respond with faith instead of fear, humility instead of pride, and grace instead of bitterness.

This doesn't happen overnight. It's an ongoing work of God's grace, and we take part through faith, obedience, prayer and time in Scripture. The Spirit doesn't bypass our minds or take away our responsibility to choose well. He renews our thinking so we can recognise what fits with who God is.

The Fruit Shows What's Inside

In Galatians 5:22–23, Paul lists the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. That's a picture of what a Spirit-governed life looks like.

The proof of the Spirit's work isn't how intense our spiritual experiences are, or how busy we are at church. It shows up in our character in ordinary moments:

- How do I react when someone lets me down?
- How do I treat people who disagree with me?
- What happens to my patience when I'm tired, frustrated or under pressure?
- How do I use authority when others depend on my decisions?

These everyday moments reveal what's really driving our hearts. Someone can talk passionately about the Holy Spirit and still struggle with kindness, humility or self-control. That should lead us not to guilt, but to an honest look at ourselves.

Spiritual maturity isn't measured by how loudly we express our faith, but by how steadily Jesus' character is being formed in us.

Real Freedom

"Being governed" might sound restrictive. We tend to think freedom means doing whatever we want. But the Bible sees freedom differently. In Galatians 5:13, Paul says we've been called to be free, but not to use that freedom to please ourselves. Instead, we're to serve one another humbly in love.

True freedom isn't having no one in charge. It's being set free from sin's control so we can live in God's goodness, love and purposes.

And the Spirit doesn't rule us through fear, pressure or manipulation. Romans 8:14–16 says He leads us as God's children, and assures us that we've been adopted into God's family. We don't obey to be accepted. We obey because we already are.

Questions to think about

- What influences most shape my thoughts, attitudes and decisions? Are they drawing me closer to Jesus?
- When I face frustration, disappointment or conflict, do my reactions show the fruit of the Spirit?
- What part of my life needs to come more fully under the Holy Spirit's influence?

JESUS AT THE CENTRE: THE SPIRIT MAKES US LIKE JESUS

The goal of being governed by the Spirit isn't just to become more disciplined, more balanced or better behaved. Those things can be good, but the real goal is to become more like Jesus.

In John 16:13–15, Jesus says the Spirit of truth will guide His followers into all truth and will bring glory to Jesus. The Spirit doesn't have a separate agenda. He points to Jesus, testifies about Him, and forms His character in us.

Jesus lived in perfect obedience to the Father. His compassion was for everyone. His humility wasn't weakness. His holiness was never cold or unloving, and He never used His authority for selfish gain.

Through His death and resurrection, Jesus broke the power of sin and opened the way for a new relationship with the Father. The Holy Spirit now brings that new life into our everyday experience.

That means being governed by the Spirit should make us more like Jesus in how we think, speak, serve, forgive and love. We should become more aware of others' needs, more open to correction, more faithful in our commitments, and more grounded in God's Word.

And when we fall short, there's still hope. We come back to Jesus' grace, confess where we've failed, and keep walking in the power of His Spirit.

PRAYER

Personal Prayer — Heavenly Father, thank You for the new life You've given me through Jesus, and for Your Holy Spirit who lives in me. Forgive me for the times I've let fear, pride, ambition, resentment or the world shape my thoughts and choices.

Holy Spirit, renew my mind and change my heart. Show me the attitudes and desires that don't line up with Your Word, and give me humility to accept Your correction. Let Your truth shape my thinking, Your love shape my relationships, and Your wisdom guide my choices. Grow Your fruit in me so my life looks more like Jesus.

Lord Jesus, You are my Saviour and my Lord. Bring every part of my life under Your loving authority. Help me walk in the freedom, peace and goodness that come through Your Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.

For Our Leaders — Pray that our pastors, elders and ministry leaders would be governed by God's Word and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Ask God to grow in them humility, integrity, patience, self-control and a deep love for His people. Pray that their decisions won't be driven by fear, ambition, pressure or the need for recognition, but by a sincere commitment to Jesus as Lord.

For Our Leaders — Pray that our church will keep growing as a community shaped by the character of Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen our unity, deepen our love for each other and build a culture of humility and grace. Pray that our ministries, small groups and families will show the fruit of the Spirit in what we say and do. Remember those in our community struggling with fear, conflict, discouragement or hard choices. May our church be known not just for its programs, but for the presence of Jesus seen in His people.

LIVING IT OUT: SHAPED EVERY DAY

Being governed by the Spirit isn't a one-time decision. There will be days we get it right and days we need to come back to God and start again. But His grace is always enough, and His Spirit keeps working in us.

This week: Take an honest look at what shapes your everyday life: your conversations, relationships, priorities and how you react when things get hard. Ask whether these areas are looking more like Jesus. Pick one attitude, habit or way of thinking that needs to come more fully under the Spirit's influence. Bring it honestly to God, see what Scripture says, and take one practical step toward obedience.

Spiritual maturity isn't about being perfect. It's about a growing life of turning back to God, trusting Him, and being changed by His grace.

Kingdom principle: A life governed by the Spirit is a life increasingly shaped by the truth, character and lordship of Jesus Christ.

FINAL WORD: A PEOPLE LED BY THE SPIRIT

"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit." — Galatians 5:25 (NIV)

We finish where we started: **those who are built by the Spirit are led by the Spirit.** Our theme, **An Enduring House — Built by His Spirit**, reminds us that God's work can't be done by human strength alone. But it isn't only about how God builds His Church. It's about how He shapes His people.

Over these four weeks we've seen four sides of a Spirit-led life:

- **Submitted:** following the Spirit starts with a willing, surrendered heart.
- **Strengthened:** the One who calls us to obey also gives us the power to stay faithful.
- **Moved:** we learn to notice His leading and respond with courage, wisdom and obedience.
- **Governed:** we let His truth and character shape our thoughts, attitudes, relationships and choices.

Together they remind us that the Holy Spirit isn't just the power behind what we do. He's God's presence shaping who we become.

BECOMING AN ENDURING HOUSE

A lasting house isn't measured by how many activities, ministries or achievements it has. Its real strength is people who are firmly rooted in Jesus and keep depending on His Spirit.

We can't truly want a church built by the Spirit while refusing to be led by Him ourselves. The Church grows stronger when its people choose humility over pride, faith over fear, obedience over convenience, and love over self-interest.

So as another year draws to a close, may we stay surrendered to His will, strengthened by His presence, responsive to His leading and governed by His truth. And above all, may Jesus stay at the centre of everything we are and everything we do.

Because a house built by the Spirit must also be a house led by the Spirit.

Final Kingdom Principle: An enduring house is built by the Spirit and sustained by people who keep following His lead.

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