

Week 5: Walking with Jesus and the Spirit

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Living in the Last Days Life Group

Description: A chief relationship we must foster and grow is our relationship with Jesus and the Spirit. But how do we do that? What are some tools we can use to draw close to God? How do we renew our minds and keep focused on Jesus in a world full of distractions?

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Teaching (45 minutes)

Keeping Connected to Jesus

As we walk in a world against us in Jesus, we realize that our relationship with Jesus is the only thing that matters. Without Jesus, we can't do anything ([John 15:5](#)).

John 15:5 ESV

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

How do we abide in Jesus? The word “abide” has a special place in the language of the Bible. To abide is to remain, to stay,, and to live in Jesus. We seek to find our place in Jesus.

The peace and rest that comes from our relationship with Jesus, from abiding and dwelling in Him alone, is our most important desire. Peace and rest are the byproducts of a life dwelling and enveloped in Jesus.

How do we remain in Jesus? We do it by keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus. While other people are focusing on the problems in the world, we are taking those problems in the world and in our lives to Jesus.

There are several ways to stay close to Jesus and remain in Him:

1. **Prayer.** Many of us as young Christians begin our life with Jesus by learning how to pray. We never stop learning how to communicate with Him. Our prayers may start out with something written by someone else. But we need to graduate into praying personally with Jesus.
2. **Reading and studying the Word of God.** It's called that because He speaks it to us every time we read it. The Bible is one of the best ways to stay close to Jesus despite the world burning all around us.
3. **Devotions.** Devotions include much more than reading a verse or two, looking at what someone else has to say about it, and having a short prayer. Devotion is more than the first couple of minutes of your day. Devotion is aptly named, for it shows us how to devote ourselves to Jesus. It should happen throughout the day.
4. **Talking to Jesus.** This is different than prayer. Have you ever noticed that you talk to your friends about anything and everything? Jesus is your closest Friend. Don't let people tell you you're crazy if you talk to Jesus throughout your day. You can address anything with Him. I often start by asking Him how I can please Him with the way I think, act, and speak.

Nurturing Your Relationship with the Holy Spirit

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit dwells within Christians (). But for many Christians, the Holy Spirit is a stranger. It's like allowing a stranger to live in your house and not even knowing the stranger is there, or to act like he isn't there.

Consequentially, most Christians do not know how to have a relationship with the Spirit. While Jesus is alive and in heaven right now preparing a place for us ([John 14:1](#)), the Spirit dwells within us and represents Him.

We need to develop and nurture a relationship with the Spirit. Just like with Jesus, you can talk to the Holy Spirit. He is a Member of the Trinity, so you can pray to Him like you pray to Jesus and the Father.

One of the greatest ways to nurture your relationship with the Spirit is to be filled with Him and to pray and sing in tongues ([Ephesians 6:18](#); [1 Corinthians](#)

[14:14-15](#)). Speaking in tongues begins when you are baptized (immersed) in the Spirit by Jesus ([Acts 2:1-4](#)).

Ephesians 6:18 *ESV*

praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

1 Corinthians 14:14-15 *ESV*

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.

Acts 2:1-4 *ESV*

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Speaking in tongues allows your spirit to talk to the Holy Spirit. It is a form of communication your mind will not make any sense of ([1 Corinthians 14:14-15](#)). But it is food for your spirit to speak to the Holy Spirit in a language you do not know.

Paul said you can pray with your spirit and sing with your spirit. Your mind is unfruitful, but you can also sing and speak praises to God in your native language.

Another way you can nurture your relationship with the Spirit is to seek to be guided by Him in your spiritual formation and growth. The “Holy” Spirit teaches you how to be a holy and righteous person. One of His goals is for you to become more like Jesus and be conformed to His image ([Romans 8:28-30](#)).

When we seek to do what the Holy Spirit tells us to do, we are living out our relationship with Him. We can ask the Holy Spirit to help us make God honoring decisions, to act and behave in holy ways, and to guide us to the next step.

It’s very important we realize He will often keep bringing things up we thought we had already figured out. Many times, our spiritual growth and growing into

Jesus's image will be a circular path rather than a linear one. We may have to address issues multiple times as we grow.

The Holy Spirit leads us into that relationship. He also leads us as we minister to others with our gifts and abilities. He gives us our gifts ([1 Corinthians 12:7-8](#)) and we need to follow Him when we step out and use them by His prompting.

One of the ways we hear the Spirit is through the intuition and “nudges” we get from Him. We must be careful when we start speaking about listening to our inner voice. That could be us instead of the Holy Spirit. But you will know when He speaks to you. You will feel Him nudging you to do something, speak to someone, and a host of other actions.

Another way we develop our relationship with the Spirit is by asking Him about the Scriptures we read. The Holy Spirit inspired Scripture, and so He illuminates God's Word to us. When you receive a revelation or understanding about a verse or passage, or suddenly understand how it connects to another verse, passage, topic, or idea, that is the Holy Spirit.

Maintaining Spiritual Health

As long as we stay close to Jesus and listen to the Spirit, we are growing in our spiritual walk. But how do we maintain our spiritual health?

One way to do this is through practicing the spiritual disciplines. There are several good books on spiritual disciplines. Some of them are Bible intake, worship, prayer, solitude and silence, confession, and many more.

Some of the best resources on the spiritual disciplines are Richard Foster's [Celebration of Discipline](#), [The Spirit of the Disciplines](#) by Dallas Willard, and Donald S.. Whitney's [Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life](#). Any of these will take you through spiritual disciplines you can practice. You can drill down on a specific discipline with other books dealing with that discipline.

You should also pay close attention to the help of others like your spiritual mentor. They are also helping you grow by the noticeable things they see in you and the things you talk to them and pray about together.

Another part of maintaining spiritual health is to be regularly involved with a community of saints. Through corporate worship, learning and teaching, and

practice with the example of others, you will grow closer to Jesus and in your walk with Him.

Watching the example of other Christians helps too. You can imitate the godly things you see in them ([Hebrews 12:1](#); [1 Corinthians 4:16](#); [1 Corinthians 11:1](#); [Ephesians 5:1](#)).

Renewing Your Mind

The mind of a Christian is the most fragile and underdeveloped part of our walk with Jesus. So many times we allow stinking thinking to produce the wrong thought patterns, behavior, actions, and speech.

This is one of the reasons Jesus gives you the helmet of salvation ([Ephesians 6:17](#)) as one of your characteristics for spiritual warfare.

Paul talks about renewing your mind to keep you conformed to Christ and not conformed to this world ([Romans 12:2](#)).

Romans 12:2 ESV

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Renewing your mind is not a one time occurrence. You must be continually renewed in your mind. God is the one who renews your mind.

We are being conformed to Jesus's image, but we are not to be conformed to this world. It takes a transformation, a changing of our minds, which are made new in Christ ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)) for us to not think like the world.

One way our minds are renewed is through testing what God's will is. We are looking for what is good, acceptable, and perfect. You cannot find that in the world. You must find it in what God is doing.

If you do find these three things in the world, you should dwell on them in your thoughts. It is best to dwell on Scripture, meditating on it and memorizing it. That is another way you can renew your mind.

Paul talks a lot about the mind in Philipians. One of the places that is very familiar to us is another way to renew your mind. [Philipians 4:6-8](#) talks about how to renew your mind.

Philipians 4:6-8 ESV

do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

We let our minds dwell on these eight characteristics. When we see them, they are windows of God's work and power in the world.

We teach our minds to not allow us to dwell on anxious thoughts. Instead, we give them over to the Lord in prayer and He gives us a peace that passes our understanding. You can see how many "mind" terms are just in these couple of verses.

There's another way you can renew your mind. It is part of spiritual warfare because Jesus gives us weapons of warfare that are not like carnal weapons. They help us to take our thoughts captive to Christ instead of assenting to the philosophies and thoughts in this world ([2 Corinthians 10:3-5](#)).

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 ESV

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

Protecting Your Heart and Mind

Our heart and mind must be protected from the ways and thinking of this world. One of the ways we do this is by not allowing the cruelty and brutality of this world to affect us.

We do not open ourselves to the violence, crude behavior, and battles of this world. You must not get caught up in the ways of this world, the things of this world, or the arguments of this world.

The only reason we should be involved in this world is for the redemptive work of Christ through us. If you must debate with arguments, insert yourself into the issues of this world, and deal with the things of this world, it should be to glorify God and win people to the cause of Christ.

God protects our minds with the helmet of salvation ([Ephesians 6:17](#)). This helmet keeps our mind from being destroyed by the world. Anytime Satan tries to question your salvation, this helmet protects you.

Don't allow anyone to challenge your faith and spiritual growth in the gospel and in Christ. He is doing a great work the world cannot understand ([1 Corinthians 2:10-13](#)).

2 Corinthians 2:10-13 ESV

Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs. When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord, my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.

The Bible tells us there are two different ways of thinking. There's the natural way and the spiritual way. We know the spiritual way to think and spiritual things do not make sense to the world, but they make sense to us ([1 Corinthians 2:14-16](#)).

2 Corinthians 2:14-16 ESV

But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?

A Warning about These Approaches

Do not isolate one or two of these approaches and think you will grow by leaps and bounds. You must remember all these approaches and perhaps practice as many as you can at a time.

Some of these practices should always be active in your life, like prayer, Bible reading and study, worship, and one other discipline you are focusing on.

None of these approaches guarantees you will grow spiritually. You cannot just go through the motions. You must be intentional about your spiritual growth and cultivating your relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Identity in Christ

I will briefly brush over these few parts of your identity in Christ because it is the main theme and study of several groups in our church this year. Identity in Christ starts with Jesus, so your identity is who you are in Christ.

- **Blessed in Christ ([Ephesians 1:3-14](#))**. Paul talks about several of the benefits of knowing Jesus and being found in Him. These range from talking about our salvation as forgiveness by Jesus, redemption, and adoption. We also now are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.
- **God's child/Part of God's family ([John 1:12-13](#); [Ephesians 2:11-22](#))**. God has made you one of His children, given you an inheritance, and major member of His family. You're not like you used to be.
- **Seated with Christ ([Ephesians 2:1-9](#))**. You belong to Jesus and your focus is on Him. You have a place in heaven as part of your inheritance. Jesus has given you authority through relationship with Him to strike down spiritual strongholds. Your focus is on things above instead of below.
- **God's new creation and masterpiece ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#); [Ephesians 2:10](#))**. Your old life and thoughts are the past. You now look to grow in Christ and understand how He has made you a new creature. Your desires change from wicked things to glorifying God. He has created you as His masterpiece to do the works that glorify Him.

Authority in Christ

What is Christian authority? It is authority given to you by Jesus to make disciples ([Matthew 28:19](#)), fight spiritual battles and cast out demons, and stand against the evil forces and everything that opposes God.

Where does it come from? Your authority comes directly from your relationship and covering by Jesus. If you do not have a relationship with Jesus, quoting words you think will get rid of demons will not work ([Acts 19:13-16](#)). Without Jesus you can do nothing ([John 15:5](#)).

- **Spiritual warfare.** You have the power of Christ to stand up against strongholds ([Ephesians 6:10-13](#)). You have the mind of Christ and spiritual weapons to defeat the wicked thinking that opposes God in this world ([2 Corinthians 10:3-5](#)). You can cast out demons with a word like Jesus. You pray for spiritual power to defeat the enemy in others and thwart the oppression he and his demons seek to bring into your life.
- **Misunderstanding/misusing Christian authority.** Do not cast out demons in any name but Jesus's. People think their spiritual authority gives them power to do things without prayer and preparation in relationship with Jesus. There's also been some very very false teaching within the body of Christ about spiritual authority and what all Intels. Acid Test: if it smells fishy, it's probably rotten.
- **Comfortable with your authority.** As long as you properly use your spiritual authority as a Christian, it is a powerful way to be a witness for Jesus and stand against the wickedness of this world until Jesus returns.

Discussion (30 minutes)

Application (10 minutes)

Resources for the spiritual disciplines

[*Celebration of Discipline*](#)

[*The Spirit of the Disciplines*](#)

[*Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*](#)