



## **Summer Fruit-Part 11**

### **The Fruit Producing Relationship**

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Well, one of the strange things about having our sermons broadcast everywhere on radio and, of course, through our Web site is occasionally people will stumble onto my teaching, usually on the radio, and they knew me as a kid and they're quite surprised at listening to me talk. Partly not because I was some juvenile delinquent, but because I never talked in school. They didn't know I could speak or talk out loud. So I think they're shocked of that. But I've often thought when I'm out there, you know, on the airwaves that if my English teacher could only hear me now talking about grammar and infinitive verbs and predicate nominatives in objects, in prepositions, indefinite articles, I mean, she would be shocked to know that I had any interest in that at all. Because when she knew me, I had zero interest in that. She was right to give me the bad grades that I got because I didn't pay attention. I didn't think it was important. Then I become a Christian and I start studying the Bible and I realize how important grammar is. I mean, you better understand some grammar if you're going to understand what God has to say.

I mean, case in point, last week we were dealing with the issues of these passive verbs versus these active verbs. You know, we talk about indicative moods versus, you know, the imperative moods. Things that have happened to us, things that God has done, indicative passive, and things that we're called to do, things that we have to actively engage in. I mean, those distinctions can make a world of difference in understanding the Bible. And so, you know, I'm stuck in that world now. I still don't like it, but I have to engage in it. And I do find the great value in thinking through these things, particularly as we dealt with that passage last week in talking about what God has done. We have been crucified with Christ and that we were called at one point in the beginning of our Christian life to crucify our flesh with its passions and desires. And of course, we said that repentant life needs to continue on every day as we've been dealing with how to bear this fruit. Right? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control, those nine things we've been studying. We took a couple months to go through those each a week at a time. And then we said, well, we know it's going to be a battle. The struggle is going to be real because of the fallenness of our human flesh and all the impulses and desires and passions I have. So it's hard for me to do these things, but God's Spirit is supposed to have me do these things. There's something about that relationship that's going to change all of that.

Well, we've talked a lot about the fight. Well, this week we come to verse 25 and you want to talk about the difference between passive and active. You want to talk about the difference between indicative and imperative. I mean, you really don't want to talk about that, but if you did, here would be a passage in a short little verse where you have the two sides of the coin. The focus isn't, thankfully, this week again on fighting the battle, although I hope you were motivated last week to leave and fight this battle for the last seven days. The challenge here is to understand what we are to do based on what God has done, in particular the third person of the Godhead. Think about this now. The whole point of this passage is the Fruit of the Spirit, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which is an interesting way for us to think through our



relationship with God, the Triune God. If you think about God in First Timothy Chapter 6, ensconced or enthroned in unapproachable light, like you're not getting near him. And yet we say we have a relationship with God, we say we're close to God, if we "draw near to God he'll draw near to you."

What are we talking about? What about Christ? Christ said, "I'm going to leave you." He told his disciples that in the Upper Room Discourse. And then he left, the Ascension, and then he said, "now he's at the right hand of the throne of God." I mean, he's there. Well, in the Triune God, the roles of the Triune God, the third person of this Godhead is supposed to be the one that now I deal with every single day. And when you start talking about the ministry of the Spirit or the things that the Holy Spirit is said to do, you start to get into this really "whoo-ooo" special kind of world because everyone's got some opinions and ideas and it gets weird sometimes talking about the Holy Spirit. And here's one of the reasons why. Because if you're thinking about the indicative side, the passive side from your perspective, things that God has done for you, what the Spirit has done for you, those are things that are kind of behind the scenes. Those are things that you didn't watch firsthand happen. You might have had some repercussions and ramifications. You may have even had some experience of some kind. But the reality is the things that the Bible says, these are the most critical things as it relates to what the Holy Spirit has done for you, giving you life in particular as our passage is going to say. We're about to read it. We're going to get there. That is an act and a set of things that have happened where you weren't even present for it in many ways. In other words, yeah, it was all about you. But it's like you having an attorney in a courtroom representing you when you're not even there. It's like you being a child and you having your parents be able to officially, as the gavel comes down, say you are now adopted into this family and you're in the next room playing with building blocks, with Legos. The reality of what's going on there, the Bible focuses on. Here's what the Spirit has done for you and we don't get to have a first, you know, row perspective on that. And we have to go, "Okay. I learned about what happened in that courtroom. Now I'm going to respond to what happened in that courtroom, even though I didn't get to watch it firsthand."

So after all that, let's read now verse 25. Galatians Chapter 5 verse 25. I want to show you a very simple passage, but I want to show you the two sides of this. And if you did download the digital outline, there are just two basic chunks to this message. One is something that has happened to us. Right? That's passive. Right? Something that is indicative. It's true about us. And then there's something here in the second half that is supposed to be our active response. That is supposed to be something imperative, something that we are called to do in the next week and the rest of our Christian life.

OK, ready? Let's read it. Finally, after all that. That was a big run in for Galatians Chapter 5 verse 25. "If," which a lot of the "ifs" in the Scripture like this are intended in the context to be very clear that it's not an "if" like "I just wonder if" it's an "if" in the sense of "since." Right? Like, you know, "if you are hungry, you should eat," and assuming that you are. In this case, of course, he's assuming this is true of the Galatians. And so I'm going to preach this message as though it's true of you.

But again, as we said last week, we don't know, really. I mean, I don't know. We've got wheat. We've got weeds. You've got people here who come to church, look like Christians, they sing Christian songs. I mean, they are in small groups. They read the Bible. All of that stuff is true, but we don't know, objectively, but in this group, this mixed group, I'm going to preach as though we're all wheat, we're all really Christians. So he says "If," or since, "we live by the Spirit," there's the indicative side. There's something that is true and it's happened and it's already happened. And it happened TO you. Right? You got life by the Spirit, whatever that sentence means, whatever that phrase means. Then, if that's the case, well, then here's the then part, "Let us also keep in step with the Spirit."

So something has happened to me as it relates to the Holy Spirit and now there's something I'm supposed to do as it relates to responding to the Holy Spirit. So there's some truth, what the Spirit did for me, and then there's a response. What am I supposed to do "for the Spirit?" What am I supposed to do? So, let's take those two things and break them into two categories. It may feel a little bit like a theology classroom this morning, but let's think through what we know about what this phrase means in the rest of Scripture, "to live by the Spirit." OK?

First one. Speaking of "whoo-ooo," here is what often is turned into some really bizarre thing in your mind. But let's talk about the first word. If there's a heading for this section, four things, the heading is this: we ought to appreciate four things that the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, has done for you. And again, the "you," I'm assuming that you are an actual Christian. You put your trust in Christ, your life has changed because of your relationship with God, you have trusted in him and repented of your sins. So what are four things, four of the primary most fundamental, basic things that the Spirit of God has said to do for you? Here's the first one. Ready? Four words. Here's the first word. "Baptism." OK? Baptism. And here's the way, a phrase that's used, are you ready for this? You've been "baptized by the Spirit." "And, you know, I don't think I have." No, no. If you're a Christian, you have. And you'll hear the speech every time we have baptisms in water, we have the discussion. You've heard it ad nauseum for me every time and you're going to hear it again next week because we're going to have baptism and I'm going to say, "baptism, baptizo, that's a Greek word, that transliterated, not translated." And you're going to go, "I've heard this a million times. "Does baptism save you?" And then you're supposed to say, "which one?" You've heard all that. Right? Unless you're new.

Well, let me reiterate, baptism is transliterated. It's not translated. "Baptizo" is the Greek word, "baptism" is simply a transliteration into English. If you were to translate it, you'd need a different word. Don't just give me the Greek word. You've got to translate it. If you were to translate the word "baptism" or "baptizo," you'd get a word like what? To be placed into. To be dunked. To be submerged. To be immersed. That's what the word means. If I say, "have you been baptized by the Spirit?" But now I translate it. "Have you been placed into by the Spirit?" You'd go, "what do you mean by that? Placed into what?" If I said, "have you been placed into by the pastor?" You'd say, "well, I assume you're talking about water baptism." To be baptized into what? Have you been placed into the water by the pastor? When I say, have you been baptized by the Spirit, what I mean is have you been placed into "blank" by the Spirit? Into



what? Well, here's Paul's favorite phrase, "into Christ." Now, again, that doesn't help clarify this very much but let's just start with that. You have been placed by the Holy Spirit into Christ.

I was reading around the Internet, downloading some PDFs of some things that might help me communicate this idea. I came across something I thought was interesting. 250 pages from FEMA, the emergency management people in our country, about how to build a safe room. I just thought that was really interesting, how to build a safe room. Now, again, we enjoy our weather here in Southern California. So this was all information for people that live in Tornado Alley or for hurricane, you know, places that get slaughtered by these hurricanes. So, you know, we just have earthquakes. We have no warning. They fall and they kill us. I mean we don't get all the warnings. The warning systems, whatever... Let's not get into that. But they have a little warning. There's a hurricane coming. It's going to blow your house down. And so 250 pages, I skim through it. I didn't read it, but I skim through all this, I stopped every now and then at interesting parts, to learn how to build a safe room at my office, and then it talked about how to build one at your home. The safe room. The safe room is a place, and I even like the title of the brochure, one of the brochures, there were two of them, that talked about all the details and how to build it and all the rest. Let me see if I wrote this down. I did. "Taking Shelter From the Storm." That was the title. It had a picture of a storm cloud and then the government's going to say how to build a safe room.

I couldn't help but think of Jeremiah 23, and that's just one of many passages that talk about the "storm of the Lord," the coming "storm of the Lord." And here's the word that's often used in connection with it, "the wrath of God." The coming storm of the Lord is his coming anger. That's what wrath means. He is coming back, he is angry and he is bringing retribution and judgment on the world. But there is a, to make this analogy, a safe room. And the three persons of the Godhead are divided up this way in terms of how they relate to that safe room. God the Father writes the 250-page manual as to how it's to be constructed. Jesus Christ is dispatched to construct it. And then the Spirit of God is to go out there and grab people by the nape of their neck and drag them into the safe room. That's the picture of the roles of the Spirit as it relates to redemption. Right? Soteriology, we call it. We look at God's plan of redemption, he planned it, we look at Christ's work of redemption, and then we look at the Spirit coming and grabbing people, and here it is, placing them into the safe room.

It's like an infant who can't get in there or some, you know, quadriplegic, there is just no way to get into the stairs down there. Someone has to take them and put them in the safe room. That's why here, if you go through our Partners program, and I highly suggest that you do, on Chapter 9, you will get some training on how to give the gospel. So often when people try to sketch out a way to describe the gospel on a napkin, it's usually about a chasm and a bridge. That was at least the way that I was taught. And I often try to say to people, "Look, you're over here and God's over there. There's a big chasm in between, Christ kind of laid the pathway across and so could you get from over there and come over here, and people say, like, "Why." "Well just because you should, because it's cool on our side and God is here and it's good and you should be here," and that's, you know, that's about all I had.



Well, I constructed a new way for us to do evangelism to kind of put some of the urgency of the storm of the Lord is coming and you need a safe room. And maybe that would be better. Maybe we need to rewrite this. But the idea of what we did in Partners Chapter 9 was we constructed a little diagram that you can draw on a napkin of an umbrella. And when the storm comes, there's a place where it's not going to rain on you. The raining judgment of God is not going to come here on this one spot, but you've got to be placed into that spot. That's the picture of urgency. I'm telling my neighbor not to just "come over to be with us because we're cooler than your friends and we got a better thing going on than you do." Or you really have all your loneliness taken away or your struggles. I'm trying to tell those people there's a storm coming and the only safe place is in the safe room. The Father has planned it out, given all the instructions, the Son has come and built it. Now I'm talking to you about the good news of you not suffering the consequences of the storm and the Spirit of God hopefully is working in this conversation and drawing you and pulling you and hopefully is going to put you into Christ, into the safe room. That's the picture of baptism.

I want you, here's the word I used on the outline, to appreciate that. I want you to appreciate the fact that you have been baptized into Christ. I know that modern Christians and weird, you know, branches of Christianity have made that into something really different than what the Bible teaches. But the Bible teaches that this is you having your status changed. It's like them down in the hallway when you were supposed to be condemned to die and they've worked out a deal in this room where your file now was exonerated and you were now made innocent and you no longer have to have the repercussions. It's like one day I'm not a Christian and then the next day I am. What happened? I got baptized into Christ. What did that mean? Well, down the hall, so to speak, the Spirit of God took all my files and placed me in a place where I am safe from the punishment that my sins deserve. That's redemption and it happens because the Spirit placed you into that safe spot. You've been baptized by the Spirit. So when the Pentecostal asks you that he may mean something different, but what the Bible teaches in Romans Chapter 6 is that you have been placed into Christ. You no longer have any condemnation for your sins. That's the apex of that whole discussion in Romans Chapter 8 verse 1. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are IN Christ Jesus," our Lord. Being placed into him. Baptizo means to be placed into.

Secondly. There's a word that is used that I think directly relates to the verbiage used in Galatians Chapter 5, I don't think, I know, it's right there. It's the word, "If you live by the Spirit." Live. Live. Well, I was living the day before I became a Christian and then the next day I was also alive. But we must be talking about a different kind of life. We must be talking about the head-scratching kind of description that Jesus gave to Nicodemus in John 3 when he said, you must be, what? Born again. "You must be born again." And of course, his eyebrow goes up and maybe with some sarcasm, he's like, "Well, what, am I supposed to go back into my mother and get born again? What are you talking about?" And all of that he rebukes him for not understanding the Old Testament prophets who made it very clear that you needed a new start. You have a dead heart to God. It's a heart of stone and it needs to become a heart of flesh. You're dead to God, that's how Ephesians Chapter 2 puts it, and now all of a sudden you become alive. All these possibilities of you relating to God instantly emerge. Now, there's a lot of work to do to build that relationship, but immediately it happens.



There are a lot of things, let's talk about your first birth. A lot of things you couldn't do before you were born. Yeah, a lot of things. You couldn't breathe. Right? I couldn't enjoy a steak. I couldn't play ping-pong. You know, I couldn't take a walk. I couldn't see the beach. You can't do a lot of... Your birth was essential for you to do a bunch of stuff in this world. Well, there's a whole world of things, including worship and evangelism and having a relationship with God and connecting in prayer to the one who made you. All those things were not possible until you are made alive in Christ, to again quote Ephesians Chapter 2.

You have to go through this thing called, here's the word if you're taking notes, regeneration, Letter "B." You were baptized by the Spirit and you were, Titus Chapter 3, you were regenerated by the Spirit, "by the washing and regeneration that the Holy Spirit did" because of the work of Christ. That is what happens. Christ has constructed the room, you were placed in this room and you weren't just dragged in as a corpse. You are now enlivened and you became alive. Now, God is there. It's like coming into, to use the description in the book of Hebrew, into this inner room where God lives. You were brought into the holy place and now you can have a relationship with God. It started day one. Were you alive? Well, you were physically alive the day before you became Christian. You became a Christian by repentance and faith and now you are alive to God. Stuff now starts to make sense. You're just a baby and you're drinking milk, but you're starting now to relate to a whole new world. Things that didn't even interest you now interest you, things you weren't even capable of you now become capable of because you start to understand the vitality of being in relationship with God. That's regeneration. Baptism. Regeneration.

Here's a good word. It's called the sealing of the Holy Spirit. Let's look at this one together in Ephesians Chapter 1. The third thing is sealing. The Holy Spirit baptizes you, the Holy Spirit, in his work, he regenerates you. And then thirdly, he seals you. Matter of fact, his presence in your life is the sealing. Take a look at this with me in Ephesians Chapter 1. It would be good if you looked at this together. Grab your phone or your Bible and take a look at verse 11. "In him," that pronoun points back to Christ, "we have obtained an inheritance." In other words, we get what Jesus built. Right? That's the safe room analogy. So he builds it, all his stuff is there, you get to have it. "We've obtained that inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him," now here's the Father, "who works all things according to the counsel of his will." He drew up the FEMA diagrams, all of that. He's planned this thing called redemption. Right? Christ has earned it and accomplished it, "so that we who are first to hope in Christ," of course, they were the very first there in the first century, the Ephesian Christians, "might be to the praise of his glory." We're going to be able to say, "Look what God did."

God planned salvation. Christ worked it out. And then the Spirit brought us into this. "In him," in Christ, "also, when you heard the word of truth," we can all get into this sentence because there's our timeline if we're Christians. Right? "We heard the word of truth," the good news, "the gospel of your salvation, and you responded." Right? You put your trust in him, in Christ. "You were," here it comes, third person of the Godhead, "you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit." Now there's the word "sealed." The Bible uses the word a lot about Christians, sealed. You were sealed. Now what do you think of when you think of sealed?



Think of this. In the ancient world you had a signet ring, for instance. This is one way it's used. And on that signet ring, if you put the wax on a scroll and you wanted to put it over the flap of the scroll, you'd put your signet ring on it and you would say, "this was from me" and you'd seal it shut and you'd put your initials on it or your name or your insignia on it, and that signet ring would say, this is what I have done. I have officially now authorized it. It's like the notary puts that little crimp little thing on the document, you know, you have notarized this. That sealing, made it official. And like the attorney with the baptizo, by being put into this relationship with Christ, you can think of this like the insurance guy who underwrites the entire thing and guarantees it. Don't let me get ahead of myself. Here it is, he says in verse 14. "Who is," the Holy Spirit, "who has sealed you is the guarantee of our inheritance." So how do we get the inheritance? Christ earned it. Christ built it. But we don't have all the stuff yet. It's not even there yet. We're not even in the presence of Christ in the kingdom. But we're going to be.

We have right now the presence of God because we have the Holy Spirit and "he is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it," and again, all of it's going to be like, "to the praise of his glory." Look at the good that God has done. The Father planned it. The Son carried it out. The Holy Spirit got us in there. And because the Holy Spirit is in our life, we are guaranteed to have this, an absolute guarantee. And it's like us sitting there one day not knowing anything about what's going on behind the veil where the Holy Spirit is working all of this stuff out. And one thing he does the day I get saved is he seals me in this and he protects my future inheritance. That's a kind of assurance that all Christians should have, that God has done the work, as it says in First Peter Chapter 1, all our inheritance is protected by the power of God because the Holy Spirit has sealed it. And that's an important thing. He's put his imprimatur on it. He's put his certificate on it. It has been certified. It has been notarized. It has been done. It's like us thinking about not only the attorney working it out, but the insurance guy underwriting it and it is guaranteed. Those are the words used over and over again in Second Corinthians 5, we may groan, but we have a guarantee of our coming future inheritance because the Spirit of God himself is given as that guarantee. There's so much in the Scripture about this guarantee.

And again, I can't say for all of you that this is true because like last week, we talked about the wheat and the weeds and all I can say, and this is a good thought from Second Timothy, is God looks down on this field. He says, "The Lord knows those who are his," having this sure seal and foundation. Right? He knows, he's got his seal on you. As a matter of fact, in the book of Revelation it talks about the evangelists there who are used from the twelve tribes of Israel and it talks about he sealed them on their forehead. It's like he's put his certification on them. Right now in this group, God looks down and he knows those who are his. Those are the people who have been placed into Christ, baptized. They have been given new life. They're actually alive internally to God. They can relate to God now. And they've been sealed, guaranteed that this is going to carry itself on all the way until you see Christ face-to-face finally and until you receive the inheritance that has been promised. The Spirit has done that for you. Baptized, regenerated, sealed.



One more. Turn with me to John Chapter 14, the fourth thing, Letter "D." We're thinking about what the Spirit has done. Jesus is giving this last Upper Room Discourse, we call it. He is in the Upper Room and he's talking, he's giving them instructions. And the last thing that he wants to give them instructions on at great length is a discussion about the coming Holy Spirit. Why? Because they're going to freak out just like you would freak out if Jesus is there and he says, "I'm leaving." And he says, "That's OK. This is going to work out because I am going to send another. This third person or the Godhead. And here you have all the persons in the Godhead in verse 16. "And I will ask the Father," this is John 14:16, "and he will give you another." Now, here's the word translated in our ESV, our English Standard Version, "Helper." And we define this often. Sometimes it's translated as the comforter, "Parakletos," we talk about. Parakletos. We use this a lot. The "Paraclete" sometimes he's called in commentaries. "Para" means "next to," "Kaleo" is the verb "to call," someone called in alongside of, Helper.

But that seems so like almost like peers that are just, "I'm here to help." Right? I mean, you could have a registered nurse come in to care for an infant and you'd say they're called in to help. I mean, but you don't see those as peers. And so it is with us. It's not that, you know, he's just kind of my helper like someone might say in the prosperity gospel teaching, not just here helping me, fueling me on, cheering me on. It's like he's coming in as someone here to deal with all the issues that we need the most. I mean, of course, he has baptized, regenerated and sealed me, but now he says that Spirit is going to come and he's going to be, here's the echo of sealing in the bottom of verse 16, "He will be with you forever, even," he's going to give it the name now, "the Spirit of Truth." That's who we're talking about. The third person of the Godhead. "Whom the world can't receive," they can't get it, "because it neither sees him," God, "nor knows him. But you know him, for he dwells with you," speaking of the Spirit, "and he will be in you."

And I just want to show that shift there of something in the spatial analogy. I always use that phrase because here to talk about "in you," is the Spirit in you? "Well, I don't know. What does that mean? The Spirit in me. What part of my torso is he in?" Right? We're not talking about like he takes up any space. We're talking about the focalized presence of the omnipotent God having an interest in me. What kind of interest is it? Is he pushing me from the outside? Is he pulling me just from the outside tugging on me? Or is he actually taking up some kind of residence in me, which is a spatial analogy of he has so much connection here to me that I have now been placed into Christ and I'm so close now with the Godhead that I have a new heart to relate to him and I'm guaranteed that this will never change and he will never leave me? Now he is going to walk through this life like some kind of mentor and leader. This relationship is going to produce the kinds of things that we've been studying in Galatians 5. I'm going to see more of his love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control come through my life because he's now going to, as organically as my spirit animates my flesh, the Spirit of God now is going to be the one in me as he changes my heart from stone to flesh that now is going to prompt me to do the things that please him. The Spirit of God dwelling in me. That's the fourth thing, the parakletos, coming in to do for me all the things that I cannot do.





Let's keep reading this before we leave it. It is such a great passage. "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." We're not here by ourselves the Bible says, and it's permanent. Right? Never leave us, never forsake us, verse 16. Verse 19 now. "Yet in a little while the world will see me no more but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father," talk about a tight relationship, "and you," by the way, "are in me," even though I'm not here, "and I am in you." Well, how are..., but you're gone. I understand that but I'm not leaving you as an orphan because the third person of the Godhead now has taken up residence in your life.

Which, by the way, moves quickly to where we're going in the second half of our passage in Galatians 5:25 in verse 21 in our passage. "Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." And you got guys like Judas in the next passage who are not there. They are a part of the group, but they are not regenerate. They were not baptized into Christ. They are not in any way sealed by the Holy Spirit, and they're certainly not even going to be indwelt by the Spirit in that change of dispensations from "with" to "in." And so it is among us. We've got people here who are not saved. They act like it. They hang out with us. But those who are the Bible says you are indwelt and that is a permanent indwelling. It's been sealed, regenerate, baptize. That is what the Spirit's work is. Now, all of that is those who live by the Spirit. If those four things are true of you, you live by the work and action of the Spirit.

Now, the response now is, well, if you do that, well, then "let us also keep in step with the Spirit." Now, that's an interesting translation of the second half of our passage. Keep in step. Some old translations translate this "walk." "If we live by the Spirit, then we ought to walk by the Spirit." But Paul has already used you want to the word "Peripateo" earlier in this passage "to walk," which is the normal word he likes to talk about in terms of lifestyle. It's translated "walk" in our passage but now he uses a different word, a much stronger word, a word that really means, as some translators translate it, "to get in line with." Now keep in step is kind of a nice way to say there is a keeping in line with the Spirit that he expects, which is instantly reminding us of the battle. But I don't want to think of the battle today. We did that last week and even touched on it the week before that. What I want us to think about is that relationship. I want to think about it even as the Bible would say that we are called friends of God. Now, let's think about that.

James, Chapter 2 says Abraham is a friend of God and it's not just THE friend of God, because thankfully there's room in that sentence for us. It's not just Job and Daniel and Moses and Abraham. You and I can be friends with God. That means we have a relationship. Not a peer relationship I understand, but we have this friendship and the friendship of the Spirit doing all of these things for us. Now, the natural response should be, "Well, then what can I do for him?" That may sound to you like some aberrant theology if you're a careful student of Scripture, but there's nothing wrong with that at all. As a matter of fact, that's what this passage grammatically is laid out as. If we live by him, then we ought to keep in step with him. We ought to get in line with him. We ought to work to do what he wants. Look at all he's done for us.



So I want to think in those terms. If you appreciate what the Holy Spirit has done for you, which could just launch us into a lifetime of study about the Spirit's work in regeneration and baptism and sealing and indwelling, well, now I want to spend the rest of our time here, Number two, committing ourselves to four things that will please him. Number two on your outline. Let us commit ourselves to four things that will please the Holy Spirit. If you leave church and someone says, "What was church about this week?" You say, "Well, the sermon was about how I can please the Holy Spirit." Well, the first half was about what the Spirit did for us. Now, I'm going to say, how can we please him? Well, this text has one word translated "keep in step with." So we've got to try and conform to what he wants. OK, let's get four things here that will help us.

The first one is super helpful whenever we're talking about the Holy Spirit, because once you talk about the words Holy Spirit, people go, like I said, "Whoo-ooo" off into who knows where. Subjectivity, emotions, feelings, impressions and we get all that. Well, let's get to where we should start and it always should start here. You want to keep in step with the Spirit, we got to know what the Spirit wants. How in the world will we know what the Spirit wants? Here it is, Letter "A." Are you ready? It's about being immersed in the book that he wrote. He gave you a set of instructions. You ought to be immersed in the instructions. If I say I want to live not only by the Spirit, I'm going to live now keeping in step with the Spirit. Well, how are we going to do that? What's the next step for me to take? Well, I ought to know what he wants. How do we know what the Spirit wants? Well, wait, hold on. "Whoo-oooo, I'm getting it." No, no, no. Open your book and read what he says because the Spirit wrote this book. You understand that, right? The passage we always quote about the Word of God is God-breathed. The Scriptures are breathed out by God. You do know that that word, the compound word "God-breathed" the second half of that word "breathe" is the word "spirit." The Spirit of God, as it says in Second Peter Chapter 1, he moved these prophets along to write down on paper the things, on paper, on vellum, on parchment, the things that we are to know. The Spirit is speaking to you. He's speaking to you. It's in that book right there.

Turn with me to Psalm 119. Psalm 119. I want you to immerse yourself in the Spirit's instruction. And that doesn't mean buy some incense or sit on the beach or learn to, you know, whatever, to chant. I'm talking about you opening the Spirit's book. It's a spiritual book. What does that mean? The Spirit has written this book and this book has instructions for you. And because the Spirit wrote it, it's not like any other book. It's living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword. When you read it, it goes and starts to do stuff in you. And the things that it does helps you to keep in step with him, the author. Do you want to get in touch with the author? Do you want to be spiritual? I need to know his book.

The biggest chapter in all of the Bible, Psalm 119. It's an acrostic poem. You can see that here, can't you? It's got these weird titles in each section here. Aleph, Beth, Gimel, Daleth, He, Waw, Zayin, Heth all the way down to Taw in the Hebrew alphabet. OK. So we get all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. I want you to look at Gimel. Right? This third one. Aleph, Beth, Gimel. Verse number 17. I just want to look at this. I made the case before that I believe that David, King David, wrote this great acrostic poem. That means that everything between verses 17 and 24 starts with a Hebrew word that starts with the Hebrew letter Gimel. That's



what an acrostic is. So this whole section, every one of these verses starts with a Gimel. That doesn't matter, but it helps you explain what Gimel is all about.

OK. 17. Here's the prayer. It would be a good thing for you to pray about the instructions that the Spirit has written. I want you to pray to God this kind of prayer. Number one, 17. "Deal bountifully with your servant." And there's a great prayer. God... Let's just be specific, "Spirit, I want you to deal bountifully with me." For what? "That I may live and keep your word." Talk about staying in step. I want to take what you've written. I want to respond to it. I want to live in light of that. I got to understand it, verse 18. So here's a good prayer. God "open my eyes." Right? I'm not just talking about my physical eyelids. Open my perception. Let me understand. "Open my eyes, that I may behold," I might see, "wondrous things out of your law." This is a poem with all of these synonyms for the Bible. So when we read the word "word," we're talking about the same thing, Scripture. When we read the word "law," when we read the word "commandments," read the word "precepts," "statutes," all that is the same thing. So he says here, "Open my eyes so I can behold wondrous things," in your book, in your Bible, "in the law."

"Well, I got a lot to read this week, I got news stories to read. I got reports to read at work, I got spreadsheets to read, I got all kinds of stuff to read. I got a lot out there. The din and the noise and the chaos of all that wants my attention." Well, remember this verse 19, "I am a sojourner on the earth." Much of the stuff that wants your attention this week will not matter 100 years from now. It will not matter. You're a sojourner here. There are a lot of things that we learned in First John Chapter 2, all these things that are pressing in on us and wanting our attention and our devotion and our affection. They won't matter. But I know this, what I want is not to have your commandments hidden from me. "Hide not your commandments from me!" Let them pop out as the top and most important data I could ever read this week.

Here's a challenge, verse 20. Here's a confession of David and maybe by Friday, maybe we can start to confess this to God a little bit more accurately than we could right now. "My soul is consumed with longing for your rules," your word, your law, your precepts, your commands, your Bible, "at all times." How good would that be? Right? There's someone who is spiritual. Do you want to know someone who is spiritual? Call him a Bible idolater, you can say they are so into the Bible. "You go to that church, Compass Bible Church? They're always about the Bible. The Bible." Yeah, well, because they're really into the Holy Spirit, you can tell them that, really into the Holy Spirit there at that church. Why? Because we're all about the book the Spirit wrote. And if I want to please the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, please the Spirit, well then I got to know the book that he wrote. We want to be consumed with this book that he wrote, all the time.

And I want to think about those who ignore it. "You rebuke the insolent, accursed ones, who wander from your commandments." I don't want to be like that. "Take away from me scorn and contempt." A lot of people make fun of me for that. "God, I've kept your testimonies." That's been my focus. "Even though princes," really powerful people, "sit plotting against me." They're plotting my downfall. "Your servant," he speaks of himself in the third person, "Your servant will meditate on your statutes." I don't care if everyone turns against me. I'm going to



stay focused on this book. "Your testimonies," this would be a good thing for us to be able to admit to God, "your testimonies are my delight. For they are my," interesting parallel of words, "my counselors." That's the very word and of course, this is Hebrew. But it's the word, it's the equivalent word in the New Testament. That's what the Spirit is supposed to be to us. Our counselor, our comforter, our advocate, our helper, our parakletos. How can this be? A book is going to be all that? Yeah, because it's the book that the Spirit wrote. You want to get in touch with the Holy Spirit, open his book and make it your delight. Open this book, verse 20, and "have your soul be consumed with it."

Do you want to please the Holy Spirit? Start by immersing yourself in his instructions that he put on paper for us. God-breathed words from the Spirit. That would really please him. I'll leave for you the rest of Psalm 119, but what a great, great reminder and section of Scripture of how important the Spirit's words should be for us if we're going to be spiritual people.

Turn with me to another passage for our second one, Letter "B." Go to Ephesians Chapter 4. Ephesians Chapter 4. If I think about this as a relationship, I have the Spirit of God, I need that relationship to help me produce that fruit. Well, it starts with me appreciating all that he's done. I want to see more love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. I got to think of the Spirit of God who's done all these things for me and now I want to respond by saying, "OK, if I'm going to keep in step, what are those steps?" And then I guess I got to make a decision about that, a decision about how my actions would affect you. If you indwell me I want to think about that.

Drop down to verse 30, then we'll get the context. Are you with me? Ephesians Chapter 4 verse 30. "And do not," here's a word, "grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed." There is what we talked about. That one number 3, a Letter "C" we talked about earlier. "You were sealed for the day of redemption." Stuck in the middle of... Can you glance around this verse? What are we dealing with in all of this section of the Scripture? It says, don't grieve him. Like in Genesis 6, when God looked at the world and man's heart was only continually evil and sinful, his imagination was filled with wrong things. The Bible says that God was "grieved to his heart" over the sin of those people.

Now God pulls out some people, puts them in the safe room, says you won't have to pay for your sin. He indwells them. He guarantees their future. He's making them alive. And now those people, well, we don't want those people to grieve you. Look at all you've done for those people. I mean, as opposed to the insolent or the wicked, those people, I mean, you've taken people out from the rest of the world and you've made them your own, the "Ekklesia." You've called them out and put them in this relationship with God. Now you're with them and, man, they shouldn't be grieving you.

So I want to make sure I don't grieve him. Well how? Well, look at the context. Go up to verse 25, the beginning of the paragraph. "Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one speak the truth." What does God hate? Proverbs 6 says he hates lying lips. He hates deception. He hates lying. Well, I don't want to grieve him. I want to put that away. I know what he loves. He loves the truth. I going to speak the truth. He's called the Spirit of Truth, so



I'm going to "speak the truth of my neighbor." I'm not going to lie to them. "We're members of one another." I mean it would be like lying to Christ. That wouldn't be good. It would be like lying to myself.

Be angry. You're a sojourner. There are going to be things that make you indignant. We've talked about that in this series. But you know what? God doesn't want any of that anger to prompt sin. Do not sin. And by the way, when something makes you indignant and you're careful not to sin, you've got to resolve that. "Do not let the sun go down on your anger." One thing that God would not be pleased with, the Holy Spirit would be grieved over, you being a bitter person, you being a person who holds grudges. Get over it. Verse 27. "Give no opportunity to the devil." You know, he loves to do work in the hearts that are continually frustrated and they're bitter and they don't let things go.

You know another thing God hates? He hates thieves. He doesn't like that. "Let the thief steal no longer." He doesn't like thievery, "but let him labor." He loves that. He loves honest work, "doing honest work with his hands, so that we may have something to share." Oh, he loves that when we share with each other, "to share with anyone in need." Those are the things God loves and his Spirit loves and he lives with you. So we don't want to grieve him.

Talk about your flesh and controlling the member of your body, that little Chihuahua I talked about, who just wants to damage, verse 29. You better control it. "Don't let any corrupting talk come out of your mouth," man. Bite your lip. Put your hand over your mouth. Don't let that happen. Matter of fact, what God would love, those are things he hates, but the Spirit loves this. He loves things that are "good for building up," for edification, fitting the occasion, just "as fits the occasion, that it may give grace," God loves that, "to those who hear." So what we've got is God hates this, God likes this. God hates this, God likes this. And in the middle of all that, oh, think about the relationship. "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God." He's there, he's not going anywhere. "By whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

And then he keeps going. Well, how about bitterness? Get rid of that. "Let bitterness go and wrath go and anger go and clamor go and slander," all of that. God just does not like it. "Put it away from you along with all malice." You know what he loves though, "Be kind to one another, be tenderhearted, forgiving one another." Just as God... How much does he love us? This is what he did for you, "as God in Christ forgave you."

If I were to be able to go up to that unapproachable light that it says in First Timothy 6 that God dwells in, or maybe that vision that John had on the island of Patmos in Revelation 5 and 6, and I would say, "Hey, Christ, they need you down here." And I bring Christ down. He's got his beard let's just say and sandals and he's in a form that we cannot, you know, they're not going to blow your mind or melt your eyes. I'm going to bring him and say, "Hey, I've got some people in our church and I just..., here's a family I want you to start with. I just want you to live in their house this week, please. Just go live there. I think they need you. I think they need you around. So Christ here, sit in the recliner when they're having dinner, when they're talking and you just hang out there in the room that they're in. When the wife and husband are having arguments, you just sit there and you listen and make sure you let them know that



you're there. When they're floating around surfing on the Internet, you be sure you're there. Just stand, put your hand on their shoulder. Make sure that they know that you're present. I think it would probably change the way you live this week, right? Hard to, you know, gossip about people at the dinner table when Christ is there bellied up to the table or when I'm about to yell at my wife and to say, "Oh, wait, wait a minute, Christ is here on the sofa." I mean, this would be hard for me to do because I'd be so aware of how antithetical my behavior is to his behavior.

The whole point of this second Letter "B" is I want to choose, I want to decide, I want to resolve to do what pleases and doesn't grieve. If it's a relationship and you've grieved someone you love in a friendship, you say, "If that hurt that person, I don't want to do that anymore." Even if I want to do the things that make them mad, I don't want to make them mad because I love them. Is he your friend? Right? Do you love Christ? Well, Christ has sent his Spirit, he's enthroned at the right hand of God. The Spirit of God is there in your house. He's not only in your house, he's in your mind and he doesn't want you to do things that grieve him. And I'm thinking, man, why would you? I just need you to commit yourself to four things that'll please him. Immersing yourself in his instructions, deciding to do what pleases him. Resolving, that's a big concept, we dealt with it a lot in this series, resolve to do what pleases him, not what grieves him. Don't give him grief.

We've got to hurry, but I've got to give this one. If you can find this real quick. Go to Jeremiah 14, please. Jeremiah 14. Whenever we talk about the Holy Spirit, I got to put this caveat in here somewhere. Here's one thing that would not please him, to be like the people in Jeremiah 14. And you know what they did? Because when you start talking about the Holy Spirit, you can talk in such subjective terms. There are two parts to a prophet. A prophet's got to get revelation from God and then they turn around and they proclaim it. That's what the prophet did, a "Navi" in Hebrew, a navi was a mouthpiece. God gave revelation and then he gave that out. So here were the prophets doing that in Jeremiah.

Well, all of us, whether we say anything about what we think God is saying to us, we sit here and try to figure out, if the Spirit is with me I guess that's going to involve things like promptings and convictions and ideas. So the Spirit of God is interacting with my spirit. That's what Hebrews Chapter 8 says. He affirms certain things and he convicts me of certain things. So I'm having this subjective experience here. OK. I just want to be careful that I don't misread him. OK? Look at this starting in verse 13. Jeremiah Chapter 14 verse 13. "Then I," that's Jeremiah, "said: 'Ah, Lord, behold, the prophets say to them,' to the people, "you shall not see sword, you shall not you have famine, but I will give you assured peace in this place.".

Okay. Context. They've sinned, they're idolaters, they've messed up, they haven't kept the rules of God, the mosaic law. God said you're going into captivity. Everyone was saying that. Isaiah was saying that. All the prophets were saying that except for the false prophets. The false prophets were saying, "let me talk to all you people who are freaked out by Jeremiah telling you all these bad things. You shall not see the sword. All that stuff about the Babylonians coming, it's not going to happen. You shall not have famine. You're going to have plenty of food. God's going to give you assured peace in this city. So don't worry about

this whole thing about the temple being knocked down or the walls being destroyed. It's not going to happen. God loves you. It's going to be OK." Here's what God says, verse 14. "The Lord said to me," the Lord said Jeremiah, "The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I didn't send them, nor did I command them nor speak to them." Here's the key. "They are prophesying to you a lying vision." They're feeling something. They're seeing something. "It's worthless divination." They're trying to tap into what God thinks but they're just worthless, they're wrong. Here's the key phrase, "It is the deceit of their own minds."

Letter "C." You want to please the Spirit? Here's how I put it. Don't blame your thoughts on him. OK, let's just not do that. Don't blame your thoughts on him. Every time you get a feeling or impression don't say, "Well, the Holy Spirit told me." "Well, the Holy Spirit said..." And certainly don't become like these false prophets who then turn around and say, "You know what the Holy Spirit told me to tell you?" Be super-duper-duper careful about that. If you immerse yourself in the instructions that the Spirit wrote in the writings of Scripture, if you understand something about the battle in your flesh, you're going to be super careful about taking impressions and feelings within your own heart and saying, "Ah, that must be with the Holy Spirit thinks." Which, by the way, notice the trend in verse 13. It's always seeming that these prophets have impressions that are always presumed to be in their own favor. Did you ever notice that? Just like you, "I don't think the Lord wants me to give that offering." "I don't think the Lord wants me to serve another night out this week." "You know, the Holy Spirit told me I'm just fine living the way that I'm living." Listen, those presumptuous thoughts we blame on God and we give that authority that we should never give. How bad would it be for you to be misrepresented? How frustrating are you when people misquote you? Think about that.

So, if you want to please the Spirit this week, no presumption. Do not blame your thoughts on him. Be super careful. If you want to read the rest of that as I invite you to do, not only this passage, but also in Ezekiel where the same things are going on, what is God going to do to people who speak falsely for him? Not good things. That's what the rest of the text deals with. We don't have time for it but remind yourself what a big thing it is for you to be blaming your own impressions on the Spirit.

"Well, then he doesn't impress me with anything?" Oh, he does. Let's end with this: John 16, Letter "D." John Chapter 16, the Upper Room Discourse. We're still talking about the Spirit of God, the sending of the Spirit, what he is going to do. Now, look at what he says in verse 7. John 16:7. With this we'll be done. "Nevertheless," Jesus says, "I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away. If I don't go away, the parakletos, this "Helper," the comforter, the advocate, "will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you." Right? And that's going to be advantageous in many ways because I'm one person here and people can connect with me and my time and all the rest. But the Spirit now, all places, all times, everyone's hearts who are redeemed. I mean, this is going to be an advantage. And when the Spirit comes, "When he comes," verse 8, "he will," now the first thing he lists that he's going to do is an impression. Right? It's this word, "He will convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment." That word "convict."

If you were to look this word up and do a word study on it, it has to do with exposing something. You feel conviction. It's the exposing. It's like calluses on your fingers that keep you from feeling something, but if you peel those off and you could feel underneath it, that's conviction. You feel it. You have that sense of what? "Of sin, righteousness and judgment." Sin, he goes on to explain, well, the ultimate sin is people don't even believe me, they don't even follow what I say. He says that in verse 9, "Concerning sin because they do not believe me." 10. "Concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you'll see me no longer." What does that mean? "Well, you're coming to me finding out what the right thing to do is, and you're talking to me about the application of truth. All of that," he says, "I'm not going to be here. But when I leave you, I'm not going to leave you an orphan. You're going to have the Spirit of God that's going to help convict you of the right thing." There's going to be conviction, the exposure of that.

And then he says, "Concerning judgment," well, verse 11, "because the ruler of this world is judged." Matter of fact, if God does not refrain from judging this seraph who had sinned and all of his henchmen, think about it, the judgment of the wrong path is going to be just. The beginning of us being in step with the Spirit really has a lot to do with our fear of God and the fear of God is saying, "Man, there's a price to pay for the kinds of rebellion against God that we see everywhere. I don't want to be a part of that." We saw that in Psalm 119. So I put it this way, which really overlaps with last week. But Letter "D," if I want to please the Spirit of God, I need to respond quickly to his conviction. Letter "D." Respond quickly to his conviction. When he exposes that something is wrong, when he exposes that something is right, when he exposes that something is grave and has a consequence, then that's when we need to respond quickly. It is the life of repentance we talked about last week. We talked about how often you repented this week, hopefully more than last. Well, it would really please the Lord if the work of the Spirit were responded to in your heart. And it's not about you having, you know, Lotto numbers appear in your mind. That's not what the Spirit is interested in. Here's what he's interested in doing. Convicting us for when we are out of step and we are not keeping in step with him.

Spirit, look what he's done for you, appreciate baptism, regeneration, sealing, indwelling. Think of things that you can do this week to respond to the generous, costly work of the Spirit and all that he's done in love for you. Well, you could love him by having more Bible, not giving him grief, not presuming upon what he thinks, and engaging in continual, consistent daily repentance when he convicts you of sin.

I was kind of struck this week in my study about us having friendship with God, which is an interesting theme in the Bible. Friendship, it's not an equal friendship, I get that. But to have that kind of relationship with God and all of our fruit-bearing, like John 15 says, comes out of that abiding in Christ, abiding in the vine. That led me to read some books I hadn't read, I mean, some new books, at least new to my library, at least on friendship. I thought, well, that's an interesting theme. It's a great line from J.C. Ryle, my favorite 19th-century preacher who started this sermon, it was of some of the best words about friendships, it's often quoted in books about friends, human friends. But all the hailing and lauding of friendship that J.C. Ryle gave us in the beginning and intro to that sermon was all about you knowing that the





ultimate friend that you want to please, the ultimate friend you want to be in step with, is God himself, the Spirit of God.

Well, anyway, that quote was in this book, and it took me back to reading some of these sections that I thought were helpful and here was a helpful section of the book. And again, this is all about our human friendships. It said this: "What we really need are covenantal friendships and not consumer friendships." And again, we're just talking now about your friends. This book and this pastor, insightful pastor from Indiana, is trying to help us think through our friendships. And then he used another c-word, he says what we need, the key ingredient to that is what he called constancy. I think he was just looking to alliterate but the ideas of faithfulness. I want to be able to say my friendship is covenantal. It's a commitment to you, not just when it's easy. See, when it's easier what I can get out of it. Well, that is a consumeristic kind of friendship.

I kind of got into that book and as often happens in my studies, I'm prepping for sermons, I kind of got off into this whole thing and I got to thinking about a completely different topic. I had to stop myself and say, why did I even go to this book this week? Well, I went to this book because I'm thinking about this relationship with the Spirit and it made me think, wow, if I'm convicted over consumeristic friendships, people made in God's image, how horrific would it be to think that I'm treating God, the ultimate friend, as a consumer? And how many of us are? How often do we do that? What I want is a covenantal relationship. What I want is a constancy in saying I am in this because I love you, I care for what you have done. I can't repay you for what you've done for me. I want to respond in love for you because of your baptism and your regeneration and your sealing and you're indwelling in my life. God, what can I do this week for you?

Well, I can get into the book you wrote. I can make sure I'm careful and resolve not to grieve you by my behavior. I can be the kind of Christian who doesn't presume upon what you think. I'm not going to speak for you when it's just my feelings. And when I do get out of line, I want to be quick to get right back in step with you. And that would be the kind of covenantal friendship you have with Christ. I like what he said about the key ingredient, I'm going to be constant. Start with constant time in prayer and the Word. Cultivate this relationship. Because if you live by him and if all that's been true of you, well, then now today, this week, I want to keep in step with him. To do that it's about you making sure that I'm pleasing the Spirit of God for the things that I do.

Let's pray. God, I know these are the fundamental things that you love. You love when we enjoy your Word, when we care about the things that you've said. When we have enough of a friendship with you to say the things that you hate, I don't want to do and I don't want to like them, and I don't want to laugh about them or applaud them. Things that cause you grief, I don't want to grieve you. I certainly don't want to say things that are just me and blaming them on you.

God, the good news about repentance is a life of repentance, when I feel like I've fallen short of your standard and I've walked off the path, how great and gracious the Spirit of God is. To



do the work that the Bible says happened at the beginning of our Christian life, that we were washed through the regenerating work of the Spirit, we want to be clean. And as Peter said, when he had to get his feet washed, "Christ, just wash my whole body." Jesus said, "No, no, you're already clean. You just need your feet washed." So God maybe there are some things that we picked up this week we need to repent of. Get us right with you. Let us be washed afresh by the work and the forgiving grace of the Spirit so we might get out there again for another seven days this week, maybe thinking less about the battle and more about the relationship. Guide us in this, I pray.

In Jesus name. Amen