

How to Walk in the Spirit

We have been discussing Covenant and how it applies to our lives. But how does this actually work out in life? How do we live from Christ our lives day by day?

Acting As If...

How do we do something that we have never done before, that we never thought of doing and, if we did, believed that it could not be done, is begun by acting as if it can be done. Faith has no other frame of reference. All we can do is nakedly obey God and act as if Christ lives in us and that we can live the life of the new creation.

The expression 'acting as if' is used to describe acting without reference to feelings. Unbelief holds a committee meeting with feelings to see if they approve of what He has said. Our feelings scream and howl, telling how foolish we are to proceed with the harebrained plan to obey God. Faith disregards feelings and acts as if God's Word is true. (think about Peter being asked to walk on water).

Read Exodus 14:15-21

When our feelings and logic scream against the will of God, we must ask ourselves, "What would I do now if this were really true?". Faith is acting on what God says as if it's really true.

Read Numbers 13:28-33

The 10 spies report makes perfect sense from the point of view of the five senses.

Read Numbers 14:1-5

The people were now practicing the presence of the Canaanite giants and their own natural inability to take God's gift.

Read Numbers 14:6-9

Caleb and Joshua saw the impossible task but their starting point was The God of covenant. They interpreted the facts that their sense reported through Him.

Put On Behavior

Read Isaiah 59:17

Another way Scripture speaks of this action of faith from the will is of putting on behavior as one would put on a suit of clothes.

Read Isaiah 51:9

Very obviously, He is not putting on something that He did not have before but is bringing forth a potential action of His true self.

To “put on” a behavior that is fitting, expressing who we know ourselves to be in Christ as we abide in Him, is not hypocrisy but the act of faith. Hypocrisy is putting on a behavior, not because we practice His presence but because we want to impress, please, or deceive other people.

In Scripture, the garment describes the person. We put on the behavior of Christ because abiding in Him, present to Him, and seeing ourselves for who we truly are in Him, we know such behaviors to be the truth. He never asks us to be who we are not.

Read Romans 12:2

Joseph threw away his prison clothes and put on the clothes of a prime minister. The prodigal threw away his slop-stained clothes and put on the best robe in the house. Think how awkward this must have initially been. Likewise, we go through a period of awkwardness as we get used to the reality that we truly are not the persons we were but are new creations in Christ and, therefore, called to wear new behaviors.

Read Psalm 109:18

It works the other way, as well.

Putting On Christ

Read Romans 13:14

We not only put on the behaviors of the Lord Jesus, but we starve the flesh by making no provision for its needs.

Read Colossians 3:12-14, Ephesians 5:1

Because of who they are, they are commanded to put on a certain lifestyle. There is not mention of feelings. We are not marionettes made to act by the Spirit’s pulling strings. We act; we will choices, our faith declares “In Christ, this is who I am; therefore, this is what I can and must do.”

The Place Of Feeling

Is the entire Christian life void of feeling? Not at all. We can be caught up in the ecstasy of His presence. But the terrible possibility is that we can become addicted to the feeling of His presence and rejoice in it instead of His true presence.

Going hand in hand with that is the belief that we live the Christian life by experiences and feelings. The feeling of His presence is given to us as His gift, in which we rejoice, but faith settles in to act as if His presence fills our lives.

Overcoming and Using Temptation

When we are tempted we should immediately become deliberately present to God and not present to our feelings, circumstances, or the powers of darkness.

We do not deny the feelings that rage within us, nor do we try not to have them. We realize that in this minute we are in the presence of God. We do not say no to temptation, we say yes to Jesus.

We must not see temptation as the enemy but the necessary confronting of the negative for the glorious positive of our life in Christ to blaze forth.

Read 2 Cor. 12:10, James 1:2

If we want to see God's strength then we must be weak. If we want to know God's joy then we must face despair. Temptation is the opportunity for the Spirit to produce the life of Christ in our lives.